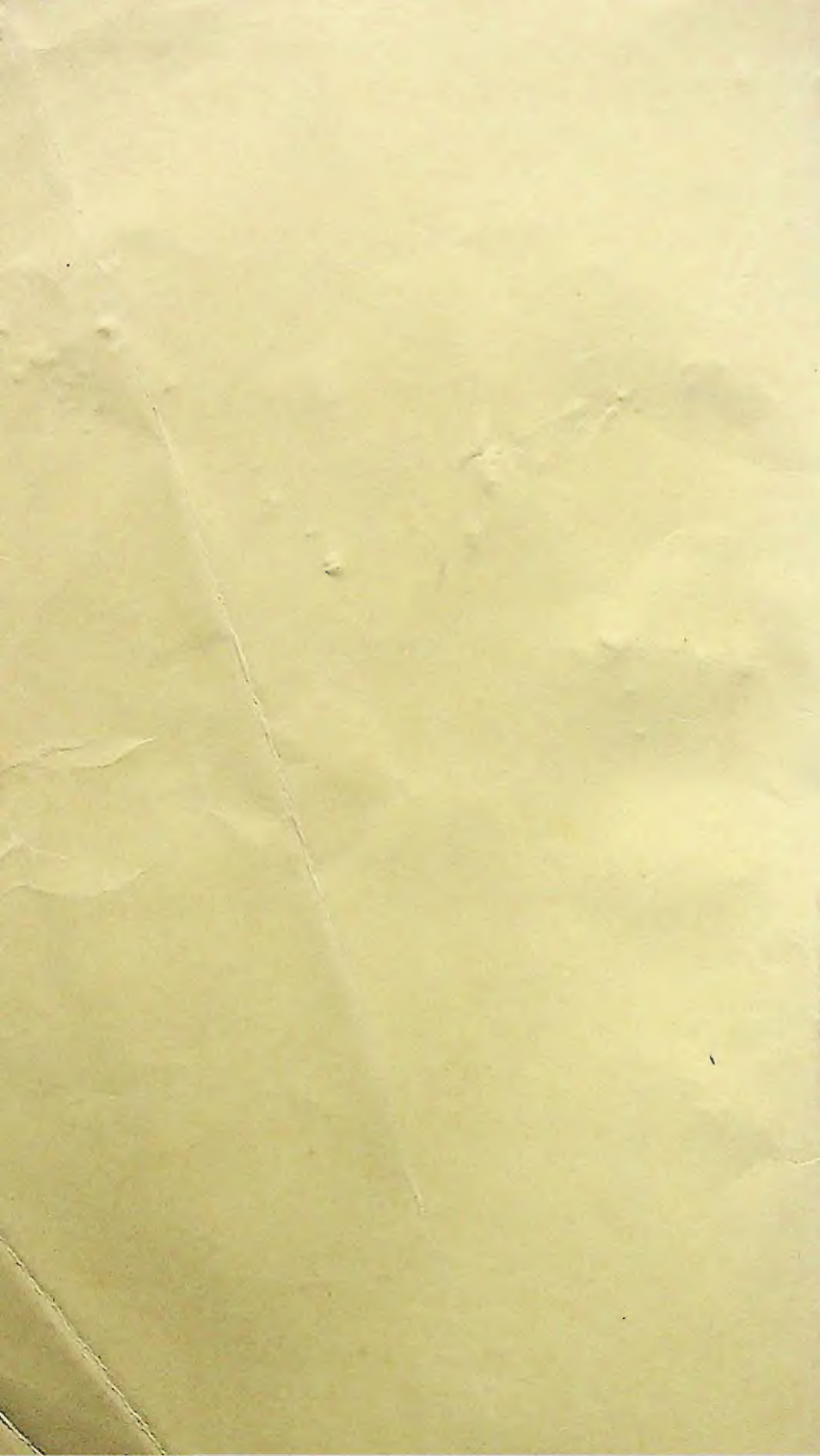




ESSENCE OF PURE DEVOTION

Bhakti Siddhanta Sar

By His Divine Grace
Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Gosvami Maharaja



For typing → 57, 8

All Glories to Sri Guru & Sri Gauranga



Still to be done
P. 63
For correction

61-3

66-7

87-89

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Essence of Pure Devotion

Bhakti Siddhanta Sar



By His Divine Grace

Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Gosvami Maharaja

Founder President of Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math
And

One of the most beloved disciples of
Prabhupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur

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Sree Gopinath Goudiya Math
Ishodyan
Sri Dham Mayapur
Nadia

Publisher :

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Mangala Carana

om ajñāna timirāndasya jñānānjana śalākaya
cakṣur unmilitaṁ yena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who has opened my eyes which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of knowledge".

namaḥ om viṣṇu pādāya gaura preṣṭhāya bhutale
śrīmad bhakti promodāya puri gosvami iti nāmine

"I pay my humble obeisances to Om Vishnupada His Divine Grace Srila Promode Puri Goswami Maharaja who is very dear to Lord Gauranga".

divya jñāna pradātre ca prabhāve janma-janmani
jñāna vairāgya dehāya śāstra siddhānta samvide

"He is able to enlighten the disciple with transcendental knowledge by dint of births of spiritual practice. By nature he exhibits complete detachment and self-realization and is well-versed in the conclusions of all revealed scriptures".

patitānāṁ samuddāre yativeśa dhāraye vai
pracarācāra kārye ca jāgurukāya sarvadā

"To deliver the fallen souls, he has taken the ochre dress of a mendicant. He is a world teacher both by preaching and personal example".

yatho uddhavyākumārād bhagavad arcane ratiḥ
vaisnavānāṁ sarvakṛtya dakṣatā paramā tathā

"Even from his childhood he manifested a great devotion to steadfast worship of the Deity, like Uddhava. In all devotional works, he exhibits great skill and dexterity".

THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF THE TEMPLE OF
ATEN AT KARNAK, THEBES, EGYPT.

FIG. 1. THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF THE TEMPLE OF
ATEN AT KARNAK, THEBES, EGYPT.

FIG. 2. THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF THE TEMPLE OF
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FIG. 9. THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF THE TEMPLE OF
ATEN AT KARNAK, THEBES, EGYPT.

Introduction

This edition of 'Bhaktisiddhanta Sara' has been only possible by the causeless mercy and unlimited grace of our beloved spiritual master :- His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada 108 Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaja. It has always been his ardent desire that books in English be printed for the benefit of the English-speaking people. In accordance with his pure desires, we have brought out the first transcript of a selection of essays from his unlimited stock of devotional treatises. This too has been done with a view to glorify him on the most glorious occasion of his 100th birth-anniversary celebration : Srila Gurudeva is well-known as an erudite Vaishnava scholar, whose prolific writings cover the broad horizon of the vast conglomerate of Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy. This is specially in reference to his innumerable essays which he has previously written for the Gaudiya Magazine and in recent times "Sri Caitanya Vani" that was started by his illustrious God-brother, His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada 108 Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaja. In his writings, we see very great symmetry as in the writings of other Vaishnava Acaryas who have elucidated all obscure philosophy with clarity by reference to different verses from the scriptures as evidence (sabda-pramana). Rarely has there been a case of theorizing as done by other scholars. Srila Gurudeva is the living testimony of a bona fide spiritual master in the disciplic succession, being faithfully obedient to the words of predecessor Acaryas and humbly endeavoring to follow in their footsteps in order to illuminate pure knowledge. In this sense, a serious reader of Vaishnava philosophy will find many of these topics quite familiar, being of utmost relevance in the pursuit of our highest goal - 'Krishna Prema'. This is the main purport of this book: only in being faithful to our predecessor Acaryas in the line of Srila Rupa-Raghunatha will our success lie. Srila Gurudeva has especially stressed the Sanskrit commentaries of Srila Jiva

Goswami and Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti in his works, with giving their renderings in Bengali. Due to some of these essays being too voluminous with the bulk of Sanskrit verses, we thought it fit to delete the Sanskrit verse and just, when necessary, give simple purports in English. I hope we are forgiven for this. Most of the topics which have been chosen are synonymous with current Vaishnava discussions of today as :- What happens when the spiritual master falls? Who is qualified to read the confidential books of Sri Krishna's pastimes? What is the original position of the jiva? And why did Mahaprabhu include the Madhava lineage in the Brahma Gaudiya disciplic succession? Though this book has been made simple in format due to lack of time, we will try to reprint this book with more details in the near future.

In his brilliant career, Srila Gurudeva has showed proficiency in Bengali and English, Hindi and Sanskrit. Below is an extract of a diary which he used to keep in English for the information of his disciples in the Western countries.

saw a big procession of several
thousands of students of school &
colleges of all the towns marching against
the government & requesting the public
to try to maintain peace & to
help breaking Gandhiji's fast:-
However in reaching 8 Hargrave Road:
(Cal 26) I take note for awhile, & then
begin to explain some serious
matters. A very good lesson
I have found out from the editorial
column of today's Ananda Bazar
regarding insulting the Gandhi on
the last Sunday night: viz - ২১৬.
০৫১৬২ (২৪: ২৫) ২৫২০ ০৬ ১২:

The servant of the servant of
Srila Gurudeva
Krsna Sarana Das



Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura



Prabhupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta
Sarasvati Thakur



Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Gosvami Maharaja

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ŚRĪ ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

by

H.D.G ŚRĪLA BHAKTI PRAMODE PURI GOSVAMI
MAHĀRĀJA

The most worshippingable Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda is the dynamic manifest form of the merciful potency of Lord Gaurāṅga Deva. I have heard that in his childhood he used to be referred by his Spiritual Preceptors -who were self-realized souls- by the name Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Later in the year 1918, when he entered into the renounced order of life, he used to be called Tridandī Swami Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Hereafter, in different Holy pilgrimage places he used to identify himself as Śrī-Varsabhanavi Dayita Das. He is the non-different expansion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself, always joyfully exhibiting the nature pleasing to Śrīmatī Rādhikā which is the mood of service to Lord Krishna. The verses of the devotional song "Vilapkusumanjali", expressing lamentation in separation to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, was known to him by rote. In the description of the glories of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, or sometimes at the very mention of Her name, he would be overcome by emotion and tears would stream profusely from his eyes. He would become transfixed in overwhelming emotion on hearing certain popular verses of the song "Vilapkusumanjali", like 'vairāgya-yug bhakti-rasaṁ, āśā bharair-amrtasindhumayaiḥ' or the verse 'yasyāḥ kadāpi vasunāñcha lakhelanōtha' from 'Śrī Rādhārāsa Suddhaniddhi'. He frequently used to sing the lyrics of the song below.

*rādhā dāsyē rahi chāḍa bhoga ahi
pratiṣṭhāṣā nahe kīrtanagorava
rādhā nityajan tāhā chāḍī mana
kena vā nīrjana-bhājana-kaitava*

Meaning: One should remain the servant of Srimati Radharani, giving up all sense of material enjoyment and try to humbly preach the glories of the Name. The pure

devotees do not merely practice solitary bhajan, which is a form of cheating.

His last words at the time of passing away into his eternal pastimes were: "All of you, with the objective of satisfying the transcendental senses of the Supreme Absolute Truth, should cooperate with one another in obedience to the most surrendered counter-part of the Supreme Lord. That most surrendered soul to the Supreme Lord (asraya vigraha) is Śrīmatī Rādhārānī. You are all present here with one purpose: that is to obtain the qualification of service to Śrīmatī Rādhārānī" and Her most beloved associate which is the spiritual master.

At Puri Dham, a few days before his disappearance into his eternal pastimes, he chanted the verses of two well-known prayers in glorification of Śrī Govardhana Hill. They were Śrī Rupa Goswami's 'pratyasam me tvam kuru govardhana purnam' and Śrīla Ragunath Das Goswami's 'nija nikata nivasam dehi govardhana tvam'. By means of these prayers, he showed us by personal example the method of the worship of Śrī Govardhana Hill. Likewise, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda used to offer fresh water and Tulasi leaves in worship of Śrī Govardhana (Stone Deity) before taking his meals in his room at the Chaitanya Math. I personally had the chance of witnessing this event. The sacred Hill of Govardhana and the holy pond of Śrī Rādhā Kunda used to be his highest objects of veneration and worship. The Chattak hill is very near to the temple of Tota-Gopinatha, where previously Śrī Gadadhar Pandit (an expansion of Śrīmatī Rādhārānī) used to serve his Deities. This Chattak hill is considered non-different from the Govardhana Hill and it was for that reason Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda built his place of devotions on top of that hill. In Vraja Mandala Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda constructed the flower tomb (Puspa Samadhi) of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, named "Vrajasvananda Sukhada Kunja", by the side of the

existing Rādhā-kunda. There he also exhibited a model example by practice of the remembrance of Śrī Krishna's pastimes during the eight periods of the day (asta-kaliya lila). The personal associate of Lord Gaurāṅga, Śrī Dvijabaninatha, used to previously worship the Deities of Śrī Gour-Gadadhara in Champahati, but the existing worship after this became temporarily abandoned for some period of time. The worship of these Deities were again reinstated by Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda. By this gesture he established that formal devotional practice to worship Śrī-Gour-Gadadhara with attachment, was more than essential for us. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda use to view Sridhama Mayapur, the birth place of Śrīman Mahāprabhu as the original Gokula Mahavana of Vraja. Srivasaṅgaṇa, the place of congregational chanting was considered the loving playgrounds of devotional mellows of Vraja. Chandrasekhara bhavan or Śrī Chaitanya Math was observed as the original Govardhana Hill.

Thereafter he constructed a tank by the side of this Govardhana Hill which he named as 'Rādhā kunda'. It was at this very place after building his place of devotions in the form of a small hut, by the side of this 'Rādhā Kunda', that he began to exhibit intense renunciation. He then demonstrated the method of intense devotions by taking earnestedly three lakhs of Holy Names daily and completed the vow of chanting 1000 million Names altogether at that place. Even after the successful completion of that vow, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda maintained always the practice of chanting the Holy Names seriously, intact. He especially gave stress to the process of chanting the Holy Names as top priority in devotional practice, being himself attached to this method. Wherever I would raise the proposition to Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda { whether I could reduce my chanting somewhat in respect of my schedule, he would in reply insist instead that everyone should attempt to complete one lakh of Holy Names as a daily function. He used to remark gravely

that Śrīman Mahāprabhu would not even accept water from one who did not take to chanting one lakh of Holy Names daily. Thus his counsel stood as all would have to find time irregardless, to complete this chanting one lakh of Holy Names without fail as a daily practice. He added however that to simply complete that amount was not the main factor, but one had to strive to remain attentive throughout such chanting and try to keep clear from the offences to the Holy Names. Those who had really the slightest regard for Śrīman Mahāprabhu would never in any way neglect His words .

In the manner Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda exhibited model example and behaviour he would preach just as effectively. He never did give support to preaching without the prerequisite proper behaviour. He never did approve of pure devotional conclusions being adulterated in any way with the other processes and took pains to safe-guard them. He would never dream of acting contrary to devotional etiquette (Vaishnava) at any cost just to acquire followers or to be part of the club, nor did he condone others doing so. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda used to be phenomenal in the sense of personal charisma and strength of character, that whenever any great scholar of influential person came to see him, they would become humbled in his presence and offer their respects him. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, accepting their courtesy in a neutral way, would immediately preach the pure conclusions of scriptures boldly. He, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, would never approve of people who would refrain or shy away from helping others to increase their devotions. He sternly declared that to be miserly in the preaching of devotional service is tantamount to violence against living entities. He mentions in his commentary (CC. M 12/135) that though killing of living entities is termed violence, not to distribute devotional messages to others, be impartial or give indulgence when dealing with the fruitive workers, impersonalists and gross materialists was indirectly

violence because rather than contribute to the individual's spiritual progress, instead this allows him to fall away.

Being a confidential associate of the Lord, we can see from his childhood the natural attraction to the Holy Names and attachment to the worship of the Deity. In Rampur, when he was only seven years old, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, seeing his intense eagerness to perform devotional practice, awarded him initiation into the Holy Names and Nṛsimha Mantra. The Tulasi beads were specially brought from Puri by Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura to be given to him.

In 1881, during the excavation works for the building of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's house called 'Bhakti bhavan', a Salagram Deity of Lord Kurma was found. His father, seeing the enthusiasm of his eight-year old son, began to encourage him by teaching him all procedures of worship with the corresponding 'mantras' (holy formulas). Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda would maintain his daily worship faithfully, and kept all the regulations intact, such as wearing of Tilak etc. This worship of the Salagram is still being maintained faithfully at 'Bhakti bhavan' up till now.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, prṣṭe brāmyad amanda-mandara giri (Bhāg 12/13/2), Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda comments : The Vedas instills truth in the heart of the living entity during the breathing of Lord Kurma (Turtle) and removes all ignorance. The breathing of the Supreme Lord in the form of the turtle in His state of slumber is analogous to the enjoying and rejecting mentalities of all living entities. Notwithstanding, if the Supreme Lord Kurma becomes merciful to the living entity, He can save the living entity from these two opposing mentalities of acceptance and rejectance by His transcendental breath. May the transcendental breathing of Lord Turtle save those fortunate living entities from material illusion! The Lord Turtle, in order to remove the itching sensation on His back, moves His body against the mountain on His

back to relieve this itching. This itching is an analogous to the opposing devotional conclusions of the dissidents who do not accept the transcendental form of the Lord. Thus, because the Lord is unable to sleep because of this itching, the living entities are left breathless. May the wind of the pure breath of Lord Turtle pacify such fallen living entities from their deviant opinions! The pastimes of the Lord Turtle including His appearance, serves to provide the favorable wind that relieves the desires for material enjoyment in the heart of the perverted living entity. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda always used to stress the rejection of both of these contrasting enjoying and rejecting mentalities. In this context the verse beginning with 'Īśavasya' is significant, meaning that everything is the property of the Lord, and we have no right to enjoy this property in a unauthorised manner. Similarly, as it does not belong to us we have no right to reject it either. Whatever the Supreme Lord in His infinite compassion have given us for our daily sustenance should be gladly accepted, after firstly offering this to the Supreme Lord, and then honouring the remnants of that offering as sacrifice. This is the only way we can conquer or rid ourselves of the insurmountable illusory energy. This is the purport of the verse 'Isavasya' as originally uttered by Svayambhuva Manu.

In actual fact, in the pastimes of the Turtle Incarnation, the incident of the churning of the Milk ocean took place all by the potency and will of the Supreme Lord, while the Demigods and Demons as agents were just present in name only. In this way too, the Supreme Lord churned the Vedic scriptures through the pure devotees Vyāsa-deva and Sukadeva Goswami, producing the nectar of devotional mellows. Just as the Mohini Incarnation deprived the demons of the ambrosial nectar and delivered it to the demigods, similarly the pure devotional essence became the monopoly of His own devotees by His grace while the non-devotees were denied such

ecstasy. This is the blessing of Suta Goswami towards the devotees.

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda had very high regard for the main holy Dhāmas like Puri, Navadvip and Vrindāvana and exhibited great reverence for the predominating Deities of each of these holy places. He is the ocean of the highest auspicious qualities which I have only managed to describe in a very small measure. Only direct obedience of his instructions will make my human life perfect and enable me to receive his mercy .

GURU TATTVA

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja Gosvāmī in Caitanya Caritāmṛta has written about the principle of Śrī Guru. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Krishna externally takes the form of the spiritual master to give mercy to all the devotees. The Supreme Lord, who is the receiver of all worship and adoration (visaya vigraha), instead now plays the role of Spiritual master as a servitor to the Supreme Lord (asraya vigraha). Never does the spiritual master equate himself as the Supreme Lord to be served by one and all but reveals his identity as the servant of the servant of Lord Caitanya (Krishna). Śrīman Mahāprabhu has coined the verse : 'gopih bhartuh pada kamalayor das dasa anu dasah', I am the servant of the servant of Lord Krishna. Though the spiritual master humbly thinks himself as the servant of Lord Chaitanya, his sober disciples should understand him to be the transcendental expansion of Śrī Chaitanya (Krishna), or His most confidential servitor. As Lord Krishna informs His beloved disciple Uddhava:

*ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyān nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-bhuddhyāsūyeta sarva-deva-mayo guru'*

Oh Uddhava ! The spiritual master is known to be My very form. At no time should one neglect or disrespect the Guru as an ordinary mortal by envy, nor should he be viewed as having any faults. For this reason the Guru is the sum total of all demigods.

Two important verses in regard of service to Guru are illustrated:

*sāyaṁ prātārūpaniya bhaikṣyaṁ tasmai nivedayet
yacchanyad-apy anujñātamupayunñjita samyataḥ*

The disciple, by collection of alms (begging) in the morning and evening, should first offer this to the spiritual master. Then, only after obtaining his permission,

can he partake of these cooked grains in a disciplined manner.

*śuśrusamāṇa ācāryaṁ sadopasita nīcavat
yāna-śāyyāsamasthānair nātidure kṛtāñjaliḥ*

One who is fixed in service to his spiritual master should humbly follow him while he is walking, to be vigilant while he is sleeping, at the time of his rest to massage his legs voluntarily and at the time of his sitting should wait nearby for his order with folded hands.

The Guru is the most beloved of Lord Mukunda. The evidence for this is illustrated in the following verses :

‘guru-varaṁ mukunda preṣṭatve smara’ in ‘Maṇaḥ Śikṣā’ by Śrīla Raghunātha Dās, by Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī in his ‘Bhakti Sandarbha’ (216/5)

*śuddha bhaktāḥ śrīguroḥ śrī śivasya ca bhagavatā
saha abheda dṛṣṭhiṁ tat priyatam matve naiva manyante’*
and by Śrīla Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhākura in his ‘Gurv
astakam’
*sākṣād dharitvena samasta śāstrair’ uktas tathā bhāvyaḥ eva
ṣaḍbhiḥ
kintu prabho yaḥ priya eva tasya vande guroḥ śrī
caraṇāravindam*

“I offer my respectful obeisances to the spiritual master who is the non-different expansion of the Supreme, as meditated upon by the saintly people and also acts the most dearest servitor of the Supreme Lord. Furthermore, the Guru can be termed as the non-different expansion of Śrī Rādhārāṇī. Our most and compassionate spiritual master has referred to himself as Śrī Varshabhanavi Dayita Dās, meaning the one who is dearmost of Srimati Radhika engaged unalloyedly in the service of Śrī Krishna. He has revealed himself in his original identity as Nayana manjari, following in the footsteps of Srimati Radhika’s beloved servant Śrī Rūpa Manjari (Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī). In this way he is glorified:

*tvam gopikā vṛsayavestan ayāntikehasi
 sevādhikāriṇi guro nija pāda padma
 dāsyam pradāya kuru mām vraja kānane śrī
 rādhāṅghri-sevanarase sukhinīm sukhābdhe*

Oh Gurudeva! You are immersed in an ocean of bliss and you can award transcendental service. You are the gopika beloved of Srimati Radhika. Please bestow on me the shelter of your lotus feet, so that I can be ecstatically engaged in the transcendental service of the Queen of Vraja, Srimati Radharani.

His pranam mantras are:

*namah omi viṣṇu pādāya kṛṣṇa preṣṭhāya bhutale
 śrimate bhaktisiddhānta sarasvatī iti nāmine
 śrī vārśabhānavi devī dayitāya kṛpābdhaye
 kṛṣṇa sambandha vijñāna dāyine prabhava namah
 mādhyajyāvala premadya śrī rupānuga bhaktida
 śrī gaura karuṇa śakti vigrahāya namas tu te
 namas te gauravāṇi śrī murtaye dinatāriṇe
 rupānuga viruddhāpa siddhānta dhvānta hariṇe*

Meaning :- "I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet".

"I offer my respectful obeisances to Śrī Varsabhanavi Devi Dayita who is favored by Srimati Rādhārānī and who is an ocean of mercy, delivering the science of Krishna".

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto you, the personified form of Lord Caitanya's mercy, who delivers the devotional service enriched with the conjugal love of Śrī Rādhā and Krishna in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī".

"I offer my obeisances unto you who are the personified teachings of Lord Caitanya the deliverer of the fallen souls. You never compromise with any teachings deviating from that as enunciated by Srila Rupa Goswami".

As Narottama Dās Thākura has expressed his obedience to the messages of Śrīa Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Prabhupāda has similarly shown the same mood of obedience to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, praying for his service birth after birth. I too, in this vein, pray wholeheartedly to be the servant of my beloved spiritual master, birth after birth.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, Śrī Kavi, one of the nine great rsis, explains to King Nimi;

“The Supreme Lord has given instructions in the most simple fashion by which even the most ignorant people can take such advantage of this knowledge. This set of instructions are termed as ‘bhagavat dharma’. In the sincere following of these religious principles, the human being cannot be hindered by any impediments, so much so, as a man running with his eyes shut cannot slip and fall down. The living entity, by the influence of the external energy of the Lord, becomes forgetful of his original identity. This results in the pure soul being bewildered by the attachment to the body, mind and intelligence and being absorbed in these false coverings becomes subject to fear. Therefore the discriminating and sober person should, by shelter of the spiritual master knowing him to be the Lord’s confidential associate, engage in unalloyed devotional service to the Supreme Lord as the way to counteract this fear.

The main process of devotion is chanting of the Holy Names which can reveal the transcendental nature of the Lord’s birth and activities. Śrīla Prabhuddha, one of the nine Yogendras, informs us : -The mature disciple should inquisitively approach a bona-fide spiritual master of pacified urges and well versed in scriptures. He should, by submission and inquiry, study the ancient doctrines from him. In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11/3/22)

*tatra bhāgavatān dharmān śikṣed gurvātmadaivataḥ
amayayā anuvṛtyā yai tuṣyed ātmā ‘tmado hariḥ*

“One should always view the spiritual master as the expansion of Lord Hari and one’s best friend and well-wisher. Only by obedient service of Śrīla Gurudeva without any hypocrisy can he be able to please Lord Hari in which case all the principles of ‘bhāgavata-dharma’ will become automatically understood.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has written : -The disciple, after having accepted the shelter of the spiritual master, should not view the spiritual master in a material perspective but should engage wholeheartedly in his service. By the force of illusion, if the disciple demeans the position of the spiritual master or tries to act superior in relation to him, then very little fruit or gain is obtained, rather the reverse occurs after such acceptance of a guru.

The knowledge of being servant of the Supreme Lord by a aspirant, leads to service of the Lord. When the Lord, seeing such earnest striving, becomes pleased, one becomes qualified to be the servant of the spiritual master and by this relentless, faithful service to the Guru, the Supreme Lord’s mercy is attained. The verse below is relevant:

*yasya deva parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah*

Meaning :- One who has unflinching faith in the Supreme Lord and the spiritual master, all the purports of the scriptures become revealed. This means, all one’s misgivings and doubts are instantly vanquished at that time. These stages are listed in the instructions of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī : Firstly, acceptance of spiritual master and then inquiring submissively from him, following which, one engages in devotional service in the footsteps of the pure devotees. Consequently, one become entitled to hear the pure scripture called Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and begins to do so. Gradually, the devotees become entrenched in the service of Lord Krishna, by deliberation of the purports of the verses of this scripture. At that stage,

they give up all types of fruitive work and become established as the servant of the Supreme Lord Krishna :This is the message of the Ancient religion (Bhāgavata-Dharma). Such a person is not confined by the dictates of fruitive work, dry knowledge, or other deviant behavior. In this world, to obtain a spiritual master who not only practices but propagates this Ancient religion is very rare.

On the disappearance of Lord Gaura-sundara His sublime teachings gradually have become distorted, together with the stress on pure devotion becoming diminished. By His sweet will, His merciful potency has appeared in the form of two effulgent stalwart leaders to carry out the rectification of the fallen people of Kali-yuga. They were Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his ideal representative Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The six Goswamis had condensed the messages of the Vedas, Itihāsa, Purāna, etc. in their writings, and these two 'Acaryas' gathered the relevant material from these works and published them in various languages like Bengali, Hindi and English in the form of periodicals and journals. By their inspiration, many temples have been constructed with the emphasis on service to the Deity form of the Lord and the chanting of the Holy Names as the ideal process for this age of Kali. Discourses on the Holy Books like Caitanya Caritāmṛta are also been carried out daily in these temples. In addition Śrīla Prabhupāda, by means of dioramas and exhibitions, have used scientific techniques to implement the preaching of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's message untiringly. In spite of their great efforts to effect the propagation of the divine message of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the ordinary people in their fallen condition seem to relish the paths opposed to pure devotion moor, which has made the pure devotees become compassionate at the sight of such people wallowing in ignorance. The present times advertise of many false gurus who by giving indulgence to the whimsical desires of their disciples, attempt to obtain a large number of followers. These so-called magnanimous personalities, being respected as the

self-effulgent leaders for the present Age, have only succeeded in stifling the devotional mood of the general masses. In this way, these impostors have denied their followers of any success or hope of happiness.

The Supreme Lord is present internally as the Supersoul in the heart (Caitya Guru) and externally as the spiritual master to bless the fallen conditioned soul. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11/29/6) Uddhava speaks"

*naivapayanty apachitiṁ kavaya taveśa
brahṇāyuṣāpi kṛtamṛddam udaḥ smarantaḥ
yo' antarbahis tanubhritām aśubham vidhunvan
nā ācārya caitya vapuṣa svagatim vyanakti*

Meaning :- "You are present in Your form externally as the initiating and instructing spiritual master giving guidance to Your disciples, with the help of model personal behavior and internally existing as the Supersoul in the heart (Caitya guru), warding off the attraction of your devotees towards sense-gratification together with enlightening them of their original position. The learned devotees, remembering Your grace, become overwrought with joy and are not able to repay their debt to you even in one life-span of Lord Brahma".

Śrīla Visvanatha Cakravarti has explained this verse;

If anyone says that the Supreme Lord is awarding the four-fold aims of life to his devout votaries is not free from limiting adjuncts but is conditional, the answer is no, not exactly that. One cannot say this because even the very practice of devotions is only possible by His mercy alone, for the myriad ways the Lord helps the individual and promotes his welfare cannot be repaid. The learned sages who are living long lives, like Lord Brahma, cannot repay their debt to Him even in the least and on remembering His grace become overcome by bliss. What is this beneficial help of the Supreme Lord? The Lord externally in the form of initiating and instructing spiritual master or Acarya, guides the aspiring soul by

giving him initiation into the Holy Mantra and practical instructions on the practice of devotion, and internally as the Supersoul in the heart (Caitya Guru), He gives them the intelligence 'aham dadami buddhi yogam tam', (see Bhagavad gita) by which they can attain Him. In this way, by giving the aspirant proper discriminative intelligence, He inspires the devotee to strive in his devotions to the point whereby he eventually achieves the transcendental association of the Lord in his original body. If the Lord in the heart does not help remove the obstacles present in the heart and inspire the spiritual aspirant to pure devotion internally, that candidate will never be successful even in million of years of striving to achieve that stage. As the internal 'Caitya' Guru, the Lord gives them fixed intelligence to proceed on. Further, He, as the external spiritual master, by the shelter of his lotus feet, instructs the candidate on pure devotional practice by virtue of his personal model example. Therefore the spiritual aspirant, in following the footsteps of Śrī Guru very rigidly and by persevering in such devotions, will result in pleasing the Guru. The spiritual master in being pleased, will automatically warrant the grace of the Supreme Lord.

This type of fortune is denied to one who does not take to the exclusive shelter of the bona fide spiritual master. In this context, the persons under the category of fruitive workers, dry scholars and ascetics are not ideal as spiritual masters. In taking to the shelter of such people, material enjoyment, liberation or perfection may be obtained. But because in all these paths the gross and subtle desires to satisfy one's own senses exist and not quite the pure desires for serving the senses of Lord Krishna, consequently pure devotion will never result. Fruitive work not done in relation to the service of the Lord instead increases the bondage of the living entity to the material world. In the path of dry knowledge, the desire for devotion is absent, but that of liberation exists,

which is even more dangerous than the material enjoyment sought by the fruitive workers. This class of people try to eradicate all differences between the devotee, the practice of devotion and the Supreme Lord (knower, knowledge and known) in their deviant analysis. When one accepts the monastic axioms like 'aham brahmasmi' or 'tattvam asi', etc., and by impersonal knowledge tries to merge in the unqualified Brahman as one's highest objective, then these practices are not conducive but rather destroy devotion to the very roots. The devotee shuns away from such people because the aspirations of such people to merge altogether in the void, attaining impersonal liberation, is worse than death. The devotees of Lord Vishnu usually are desirous of obtaining the four-fold liberations which are:

- 1-(sarsti) equal opulence with the Lord
- 2-(sarupa) having the same form of the Lord
- 3- (samipya) residing near the Lord
- 4- (salokya) staying in the same planet of the Lord.

However, the unalloyed devotees of Lord Krishna reject all these types of liberation in favor of pure devotional service to the Lord. They will not even accept such liberation if given to them unasked. The evidence of this is by the verses of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1/20/31-34).

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the spotless Purana, love of Godhead has been defined as the highest goal of life above the four-fold aims. Usually, the fruitive workers aspire for piety, wealth and satisfaction of their senses accordingly. The Impersonalists try to merge in the unqualified Brahman for salvation, while the ascetics (yogis) also try to merge with the qualified form of the Supersoul in the heart. One of the invocatory prayers of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam runs beginning with 'Dharma projjita kaitava'. This has been explained by Śrīla Kaviraja Gosvāmī saying:

ajnanatamer nama kahiye kaitava (CC.)

Śrīla Sridhar Gosvāmī, in his commentary, has enlightened us about the word 'pro' as that by which even the very desire for liberation is rejected. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja has named all that which misleads the pure soul of its constitutional function as servant of the Lord, as cheating tendencies (kaitava). Other than the original desire to satisfy the senses of Lord Krishna, all else comes under the realm of cheating tendencies and as 'bad association' should be rejected. The only goal for the sincere aspirant is Lord Krishna and His devotional service, while other desires are listed as bad association. Consequently, piety, wealth, satisfaction of desires and liberation are all cheating tendencies- gross ignorance (ajnana tamah) of which liberation is the greatest cheating tendency. The spiritual master by delivering transcendental knowledge awakens the disciple from his ignorant state. The aspirant, on receiving initiation (diksa), becomes aware of his own real nature, the truth of the Supreme Lord, the means of accomplishment and the goal. In this way, freeing himself from the clutches of the illusory energy by proper striving in devotional practice, he finally remains entrenched in steady devotion to Lord Krishna.

Uddhava, the jewel of the devotees, addresses Lord Krishna in this manner,

"Oh Lord! Your lotus feet are the resort of all saintly people and is the cause of unlimited bliss, while the other categories of aspirants, who are seeking dry knowledge, accumulation of pious work or mystic powers, do not take to the shelter of Your lotus feet and thereby become vanquished by Your external energy".

"Oh ! Acyuta, You are the Absolute friend of all living entities. In Your incarnation as Lord Rama, Your lotus feet were given the greatest reverence by the demigods. They placed their jeweled crowns in adoration on your lotus feet yet You only formed friendly relationships with the monkeys, what to speak of men or demigods? You showed

subservience to unalloyed devotees like Nanda Baba, the gopis, Bali, who all exhibited loving servitorship to You. This is not an amazing sight, for pure devotees who practice intense devotion to You are the object of Your grace and You are completely subjugated by them. The categories of devotees who are completely devoid of desires for pious work, knowledge and mysticism only can conquer You. In Your expansion as Lord Rama, You established loving relations eagerly with the monkeys. In Vrindavana too, You dallying with these lower animals like the cows, exhibited Your affection for them. An example being how you stole butter from Your house to feed the monkeys. What type of knowledge or mysticism have they practiced that You have become won over by them? On the contrary, amongst the Impersonalists, there is not even a trace of the existence of such delightful pastimes. Hence, we, being Your loyal servants, do not accept all these false processes of knowledge and mysticism. Especially, those who have understood the unlimited mercy You have given to devotees like Prahlād Mahārāja and Bali, can never be deviated from devotion to Your lotus feet in pursuance of any lesser goal like liberation.

Chandogya Upanisad states: acaryavan puruso veda (6/14/2) The living entity who has taken to the lotus feet of a self-realized soul can understand the Supreme Lord. Who is this Acarya? As Manu Samhita states :- The twice-born who performs the upanayan ritual on his disciple and teaches him the purports of the Vedas is called an 'Acarya' (realized spiritual master)

*āchinoti yaḥ śāstrārtham ācāre sthāpayatyāpi
svayam ācaraṇe yaśmād ācārya stena kirtitaḥ*

One who has realized the conclusions of the scriptures and teaches these to others by dint of his own model behavior is the self-realized Guru (Acarya). In this context, if some arrogant pundit, whilst browsing through the Vedas and not finding proper mention of Śrī Krishna,

dismisses the Vedas, then he is not exhibiting the proper conduct of an Acarya for blaspheming the scriptures. The Lord Himself declares in Gita, "I am the knower, the compiler and the end of all the Vedas". The Gita, as written by Śrī Vyasadeva, is the cream of the Upanisads and this purport of the Vedas contain two important verses, mahavakya, namely : man mana bhava mad-bhakta mad yaji mam namaskuru and sarva dharman parityaja mam ekam saranam vraja, which is that ultimately :- One should surrender to Lord Śrī Krishna with devotion for attaining the prime goal of life. The genuine 'Acarya' explains the purports of the scriptures in terms of pure devotion, 'acaryam bhaktisamsanat' and this is the meaning of 'Acarya'. Next, the meaning of the word 'Guru' is explained. 'Gu' means darkness of ignorance and 'Ru' means that which dissipates such darkness, or in other words, one who takes away the dense darkness of ignorance by giving transcendental knowledge to the disciple is called Guru. The Guru has the Supreme Lord stationed in his heart and does not differentiate other living entities with himself. In this sense, he is most magnanimous, thereby achieving his qualification as 'Guru'

The spiritual master, having the form of the Absolute Truth firmly entrenched in his pure heart, is able to transmit divine knowledge to the disciple by initiation (diksa), without himself being reduced or minimized in any way. This is the inconceivable potency of the Supreme Lord. By this potency too, He can manifest in his absolute form both in the heart of the Guru and disciple at the same time.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam the sage Prabuddha says:

*tasmād guruṁ prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreyaḥ uttamam
śābde pare ca niṣṇatām brahmaṇyo paśam aśrayam*

To obtain his highest welfare, one should approach and take shelter of a self-realized spiritual master who is well-versed with knowledge of the scriptures and free

from all vices like attachment and anger. The amassing of pious merit to enjoy in this life and hereafter is after all a temporary affair and opposed to the true goal.

It is imperative that the spiritual master be conversant with the purports of the revealed scriptures otherwise, if he is not able to clear the doubts of the disciple, inevitably the disciple will tend to become unsatisfied and may then become indifferent or lacking in faith in the spiritual master. "Para brahma nisanatah" here refers to the necessity of the spiritual master being thoroughly convinced of the Absolute Transcendence by personal realization and experience; if not, his mercy will not be of much value nor will it bear any fruit. Another symptom of the bona fide spiritual master is that he is free from lust, anger, greed which is consonant with his spiritual awakening.

In Hari Bhakti Vilas, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī quotes :

"A Guru who understands the actual conclusions of the revealed scriptures has the ability to dissipate the doubts of the disciple. Furthermore, the Guru himself should be in a position to be able to experience the deep spiritual truths and be stoic in his understanding, otherwise he will never be able to impart true understanding to the disciple. The identity of such of spiritual master is that he is peaceful and serene, whereby all base urges like lust etc. have been pacified. In addition, he is resolute in the uninterrupted devotional service of the Lord such as the limbs of devotion like hearing and chanting. One should take shelter of such a genuine spiritual master.

The dynasty from the first-born Svayambhuva Manu and Satarupa begins with their children, two sons, Priyavrata and Uttanapada and three daughters, Akuntī, Devahūtī and Prasūtī respectively. These daughters were handed to the progenitors Ruci, Kadamba and Dakṣa from which the whole human race descended. From the direct

succession of King Priyavrata was King Rrshaba, son of King Nabhi. He was an expansion of the Supreme Lord Vasudeva and an empowered incarnation. He had 100 sons, the eldest of which was King Bharatha. The region in which we are staying is named after this King Bharatha. Of the seven islands of this lotus-like Bhu-Mandala planetary system is Jambudvipa, which can be divided into nine regions. The Ajnaba region of this island of Jambudvipa is Bharata-varsa. At the end of Dvapara-yuga, the Supreme Lord graciously advents in this region of Bharata-varsa and executes human-like pastimes. It is by the great mercy of the Supreme Lord that we are born in a most pious region compared to the doorway of the spiritual world. Hence the sober intelligent person should not waste a moment, but endeavor hard for self-realization, for this human body is but temporary and only for some brief period of time. There is no certainty when death will catch up with us, therefore as long as we are endowed with living consciousness, for that period we should endeavor for the highest. This rare human form of life should not be wasted in vain but positively used in devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11/9/29), labdha sudurlabham idam, Lord Dattatreya has warned us to be vigilant in making use of this valuable human body. Once, the son of King Yayati, Yadu, happened to meet a serene sage wandering fearlessly and unattached. The curious King Yadu then inquired from this sage Dattatreya the cause of his blissful nature. Lord Dattatreya then informed Yadu that in the acceptance of twenty-four instructing spiritual masters like the Earth, sea, bee, mountain, etc., he had become self-realized and succeeded in becoming detached by this process. (Diksa Guru is one but there can be many siksa Gurus). Lord Krishna, before enacting His disappearance pastimes from this mortal world, retold this story of Dattatreya to His confidential associate Uddhava. He also told Uddhava that devotion is superior

to all other processes like works and knowledge for the unalloyed devotees of Lord Krishna disdain to accept even liberation in exchange for the bliss of pure devotional service. In this context too, the verse "nrdehamadyam" has been explained (11/20/19). After obtaining this rare human body which is compared to a boat, the spiritual master, who is navigator of that boat, and the favorable wind in the form of the causeless mercy of the Lord, if one does not strive to cross over this ocean of material existence then he is a killer of his own soul.

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda comments on this verse :-

This precious human body can secure us our highest welfare and there is no other way. It is obtained only after evolution through countless lifetimes in this universe. The spiritual master, being proficient in the science of Krishna consciousness, can serve as the navigator of this boat. The favorable wind which propels this human boat into eternity is the causeless mercy of the Lord. One who can not understand the value of this human body or the spiritual master as the ideal navigator and does not aspire to seek the mercy of the Lord, is killer of his own soul because of gross ignorance of his own welfare. Conclusively, taking shelter of the spiritual master to engage in devotional service is of prior importance. In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11/10/5) Śrī Krishna tells Uddhava :-

madabhijñāṁ gurum śāntam upāśita madātmakam

One should engage in the service of a self-realized spiritual master who knows Me in truth and is absorbed in Me : Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī defines the term 'madabhijñam' :-

He who, experiencing My natural affection for My devotees thereby knows Me in truth is called "madabhijñam". One who has absorbed his mind in Me is termed madatmakam.

Manduka Sruti states:

*tad vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet
samitpāṇih śtrotriyaṁ brahma niṣṭham*

The disciple, with sacrificial implements in his hand should, approach the self-realized spiritual master to attain the highest knowledge. In the Bhagavag-gita (4.3) "tad viddhi paripatena pariprasnena sevaya" has defined these sacrificial implements as submission, service and inquiry. 'Tad' refers to the Supreme Lord. In other words, for knowledge of the Supreme Lord one should approach the bona fide spiritual master and offer prostrated obeisances to him in a mood of submission. He should then proceed to serve the Guru like a menial servant to his satisfaction. Then he should humbly inquire about the qualities and form of the Supreme Truth with His multifarious energies. The other relevant questions will be :

From where and why have I come to this material world, and how can I be freed from this material attraction.

The Katha Sruti (2/3/14) states

uttiṣṭhata jagrāta prāpya varāṁ nibodhata

Meaning :- Wake up ! Arise ! Take shelter of the self-realized soul and understand your original identity: thus enforcing the need of a spiritual master. The Svetasvatara Sruti (1/23) beginning with "yasya deve para bhaktir yatha deve tatha gurau" states:- To one who has unflinching faith in the spiritual master and devotion to the Supreme Lord, all the scriptures become revealed to him. To understand and be enlightened by the revealed scriptures necessitates the mercy of Śrīla Gurudeva which is available only by devotion to his lotus feet and not otherwise. Sriman Mahāprabhu, in His teachings to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī remarks :

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jī va
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti latā bī ja*

As a result of diverse fruitive activities, the different living entities are wandering in myriad wombs within the universe. By dint of previous pious works, one becomes greatly fortunate to undertake devotional service to the Lord. By the mercy of both the spiritual master and the Supreme Lord, he receives the creeper of devotion which is initial faith in devotional practices. The spiritual practitioner installs this creeper of devotion in budding stage in the core of his heart and waters it by the process of hearing and chanting, doing the work of a transcendental gardener. The mercy of Sri Guru coming into play, the creeper sprouts and slowly growing, traverses the boundary of the material universe into the spiritual Vaikuntha planets and on reaching there, with renewed efforts, the creeper rises over to reach the Lotus feet of Śrī Krishna in Goloka Vrindavana. At this point too, the process of hearing and chanting becomes even more intense. The ripened fruit of that huge creeper of devotion matures as love of Godhead. During the cultivation of devotional practice, the aspirant should be specially careful to ward off the mad elephant offense or blaspheming against the pure devotees of the Supreme Lord. Such an offense will damage the tender creeper and curtail devotion. Besides, there is the tendency for side branches to sprout from the main branch during cultivation of devotion, which impels one to stray away from the goal. These are sense-gratification, liberation, desire for profit, fame and distinction, rivalry and enviousness, etc. These activities do not contribute to the growth of the main creeper of pure devotion. In that precarious condition, only implicit obedience to the spiritual master can enable us to necessarily weed out these impediments (anarthas). Love of Godhead is achieved by single-minded pure devotion which is above the common four-fold aims up to liberation. It is to be stressed that the main ingredient for advancement is the mercy of the spiritual master, which is in turn automatically obtained by unconditional surrender to his

lotus feet. The living entity, in his pure identity, is the servant of Lord Krishna. By forgetfulness of this identity, he has become entangled by the illusory energy in the shape of the three-fold afflictions of material modes of nature. The only way to escape from this material entanglement is devotional service to the Lord, through the media of the spiritual master. (In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10/27/32), Prayers of the Vedas) :

*vijita hr̥ṣīkavāyubhira dānta manas turagam
ya ila yatanti yantum atilolam upāyakhidhidah
vyasanaśatānvitāḥ samavahāya guruścaraṇam vaṇija
ivāja santyakṛtakarṇadharā jaladhau*

Oh Lord who is not born! Without the direct shelter of a spiritual master, all efforts to control one's turbulent mind, whether one has apparently done so by his own effort or not been able to do so, is of no avail. He will simply experience misery and difficulties at every step like the trader who tries to cross the ocean in a vessel devoid of an experienced navigator.

The qualities of a spiritual master are mentioned elaborately in the Mantra Muktabali Sutras :-

The spiritual master usually comes from a pure dynasty or lineage of high ancestry. He himself by nature is pure of heart. He can be in any stage of life, in his status as officiating Guru. He is free from anger. He is well-versed in the Vedas and understands the purports of all scriptures. He is free from malice to any living creature. He looks kindly on all living entities; his speech is sweet and beneficial; he is faithful to his dress and engages in the welfare of all living entities. He is sober, self-satisfied, without hankering for any unwanted desire. He is brimming with all nice qualities like affection and generosity. He worships the Deity steadfastly. He is affectionate to his disciples, he is grateful, he performs homa understanding its significance. He is merciful to all, possesses purified a mind and can defeat all opposing

deviant conclusions to pure devotion. In Agastya Samhita too, the spiritual master is described as one who is peaceful, free from desires of sense gratification, who controls his mind and body, engages in scriptural study, expert in revelation of the scriptures, the best of all brahmanas (twice-born), understands the meaning and use of Mantras, can dispel all the doubts of his disciples, understands deep truths, always engaged in purifying himself, has achieved perfection in conducting sacrifices, is truthful, austere and usually is in the class of a householder.

The Visnu Smṛti describes that the spiritual master who always extract service and wealth of a disciple and hankers for prestige and fame is not worthy of being a spiritual master.

*guruvo bhavaḥ santi śiṣyavittāparakaḥ
durlabhaḥ saḍgurudeva śiṣyasantāparakah (Puranas)*

Lord Mahadeva speaks" "Oh Devi! There are many so-called spiritual masters who are just bent on seizing the wealth of their disciples, but the spiritual master who takes away the miseries and afflictions of the devotee is very rare.

Further, in Visnu smṛti, the symptoms of a genuine spiritual master are mentioned as being very compassionate to all beings, self-satisfied and not dependent on others, resplendent with all obvious good qualities, engaged in the welfare of other living entities, free for all desires, have achieved all perfection replete with all knowledge especially regarding pure devotional conclusions of scriptures, who can cut off the doubts of the disciples, not lazy but always absorbed in Śrī Krishna's service.

When Ramananda Raya humbly submitted himself as being of sudra birth to Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the Lord replied:

*kibā vipra kibā nyāsi, śudra kene nay
yei kṛṣṇa tattva vettā, sei guru haya*

Śrīla Bhaktivinod Thākura writes in his commentary:-

The Lord Śrīman Mahāprabhu says:

I never think that just because I have been born from a brahmin family and have taken the renounced order of life, it is not proper for Me to take instruction on religious principles from one of inferior birth, i.e. sudra. It is a fact that by the 'varnasrama' system of society, the 'brahmin Guru' is recommended for instruction on religious principles and for giving initiation. The highest spiritual knowledge relates to the truth about Śrī Krishna. Thus to be a Guru able to impart such knowledge is based solely on the contention, whether or not he has realized in truth the science of Krishna consciousness and is independent of whether he is in the designation of a sudra, householder or the renounced order. In the Hari Bhakti Vilas, it is stated that if a high-born, capable spiritual master is present, it is not befitting to take Krishna Mantra from a low class person. This rule is however reserved only for the common lay men who are compelled to follow the formal dictates of religious principles. Especially, for them to make progress necessitates a 'brahmin Guru' by which some spiritual merit can be secured by these people. The devotees (Vaisnavas) are above this rule.

Those who sincerely take to devotion in either of the path of formal regulated principles or spontaneous devotion, should take the shelter of such a self-realized soul, irregardless of his birth or station (stage of life). Many concrete proofs have been quoted from Padma Purana, for example :- A pure devotee of the Supreme Lord, who is born from a low caste is a great soul and not considered of low-class, while one devoid of devotion to Lord Janardana, though of high birth, is considered sudra. The six brahmanical practices are performing sacrifice oneself, conducting such sacrifices, study of scriptures,

teaching of such spiritual knowledge, welfare activities like distribution of knowledge and lastly, acceptance of wealth. A brahmin expert in all such activities including even the science of Mantra, cannot be a guru if he is a non-devotee, while a low-class candala who is devoted to Lord Visnu can qualify to be a 'Guru'. Again, a twice-born, proficient in scriptural lore and able to elucidate their purports in various ways, that brahmin, if he is not a devotee, does not qualify to take the 'Guru' position. One who is born in the first three classes of brahmin (priests), ksatriya (noble class), vaisya (farmer), can be naturally eligible to be the guru of the other fourth class namely sudra (servant) class and other lower classes. On the other hand, the dearmost devotee of the Supreme Lord, even though born from a sudra class, can be easily accepted as spiritual master of all the other higher classes. This is verified by the verse below:

*nīca-jāti nahe kṛṣṇa-bhajane ayogyā
sat-kula-vipra nahe bhajane yogyā
yei bhaje sei baḍa, abhakta—līna, chāra
kṛṣṇa-bhajane nāhi jāti-kulādi vicāra*

Śrīla Raghunātha Dās Gosvāmī in his 'Vilapa kusumanjali' prays in the mood of humble submission to the lotus feet of Śrī Sanātana Dās Gosvāmī, his Guru :

*vairāgya-yug bhakti-rasam prayutaivaram
apāyayam mām anabhipsum andham
kṛpābuddhir yaḥ para-duḥkha-duḥkhī
sanātanam tām prabhum āśrayāmi*

I surrender in submission to Śrīla Sanātana Prabhu who gives transcendental knowledge. He who is always feeling the distresses of others have induced me to mercifully drink the highest nectar of devotion endowed with renunciation, whilst in my depraved state of blind ignorance and doubt.

Śrī Rsabhadeva gives the following instruction to his sons (5/5/28 SB)

*guru na sasyāt svajano na sasyāt
pitā na sa syāt janani na sā syāt
devani na tat syān na patiś ca sa syāt
na mocayet yaḥ sa upeta mṛtyum*

"One who cannot save his dependents from the impending face of death in the form of this miserable material world, cannot be considered as Guru. A father who cannot liberate his children is not a father and should not beget children. Similarly a mother, if she cannot rescue her children from illusion, should not bother to give birth to a child. A demigod should not accept worship and offerings from the votaries if he cannot deliver them. A husband should not be accepted in marriage if he cannot save the wife. In short, one should reject all such 'gurus' who cannot liberate us from the material illusory energy culminating in death. Just as previous times, the corresponding examples are given as in the case of Mahārāja Bali who rejected his Guru 'Sukracarya'. The devotee Prahlad Mahārāja rejected his own father King Hiranyakasipu. Bharata rejected his own mother Kaikayī. King Katvanga rejected the demigods, also the wives of the ritualistic brahmanas gave up the association of their husband on seeing their indifference to Lord Krishna.

Simply to be a great scholar is not the criteria to be a spiritual master. Lord Krishna addresses Uddhava in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11/11/28) :-

*śābdha brahmani niṣṇāto na niṣṇāyāt pare yadi
śramas tasya śrama phalo hydhenum iva rakṣataḥ*

The meaning of the verse is, one who is erudite in scriptural study and engrosses himself in scriptural expositions but does not delineate it in connection with the Supreme Lord, does not reap any fruit or merit as keeping a cow which does not give milk. 'Nisnata' means to practice devotion to the Supreme Lord and 'na nisnayataḥ' means one who is not expert in understanding devotion to the Supreme Lord. In this respect, the utility

of qualities like austerity, knowledge and high birth will be only useful if it induces one to engage in devotional service to the Supreme Lord and by itself are merely secondary qualities. In Hari Bhakti Suddodaya, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja has commented that one has burnt all his resultant sinful actions by intense devotional service, and whose character is spotless, is worthy of veneration by learned people, even if he comes from a very low birth (candala). For one who is completely devoid of devotion to the Lord, his high birth, knowledge of scriptures, muttering of Mantras and austerity resemble the ornaments on a dead body.

In Padma Purana it is stated :-

*grhita viṣṇu dikṣāko viṣṇu pūjā paro naraḥ
vaiṣṇavo' bhitāḥ 'bhijñāiro' itaro' smād avaiṣṇava*

A person who is initiated into the Vishnu Mantra and is dedicated to worship of Lord Viṣṇu and learned in devotional service is a devotee (Vaisnava) while others are non-devotees. In Pancharatra it is declared that one who receive a Mantra from a non-devotee will pave his way to hell and the only remedy for this is again to accept the Vishnu Mantra again from a devotee. In Hari Bhakti Vilas, there are stern warnings against whimsically rejecting a self-realized spiritual master (4/141-143.). For example : Those persons who whimsically reject a bona fide guru from a disciplic succession, or a Guru who has realized the purports of the Vedas is considered so ungrateful that even the flesh-eating birds and animals will not eat his body. One who rejects his true spiritual master unrightfully has already renounced the Supreme Lord at the same time, and the results of this atrocious action is that his actual knowledge and learning will become contaminated and slowly swindle away. Another statement from scripture states that, the person is lowest among human beings who after deliberately accepting a guru at first, later rejects him altogether. He will have to burn in hell for one million kalpas as atonement for this.

In actual fact, all these fearful statements in regard to rejection of a spiritual master refers to only in the case when the Guru was genuine or bona fide. On the contrary, worldly gurus who are deviant from the true path, shows enmity to the true devotees, or are simply famous public personalities can be rejected in the consideration that these gurus will not help us on to our spiritual objective.

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī in Bhakti Sandarbha explains :-

*pāramārtha guruāśrayo vyavārika
gururādi parityagenāpi kartavyaḥ*

Meaning :- An incompetent spiritual master who is worldly-minded and accepted on convenience for name sake should be rejected and a self-realized soul who can impart spiritual knowledge is to be chosen. Further, in the Bhakti Sandarbha it is written :-

*vaiṣṇavavidveṣi cet parityajya eva
guror apya baliptasyeti smaraṇāt*

The purport being, if a spiritual master is antagonistic to the devotees, or if he is a ordinary materialistic sense-enjoyer, then he should be rejected. Such a guru, not having had any symptom of a devotee, will also incur fault for awarding the Mantra in an unauthorized manner and will have to glide towards the hellish region as a consequence. The best course in this situation is to approach a great soul for guidance in humble submission. The famous verse in Maha Bharata as quoted by Śrī Jiva in his Bhakti Sandarbha commentary is stated :-

*gurorapya baliptasya kārya akāryam ajānataḥ
utpathapratipannasya parityago vidhiyate*

One who is attached to sense gratification, who is indecisive of what is proper and not proper action and whose ways have deviated from the path of pure devotion, in other words, a 'guru' by name only should be rejected. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura has mentioned when one has to reject a Guru in his Harinam Cintamani :-

*tabe yadi ei rupa ghatana kabu haya
 asat-saṅge gurura yogyatā naya kṣaya
 prathame chilena tini saḍguru-pradhāna
 pare nāma-aparādhe hoiā hata jīāna
 vaiṣṇava vidveṣa kari chāḍi nāma-rasa
 krame krame hana artha-kāminira vaśa
 sei guru chāḍi śisya śrī kṛṣṇa kṛpāya
 saḍ guru labhiyā punaḥ suddha-nāma gāya*

In Jaiva Dharma, Śrīla Bhaktivinod Thākura writes. The initiating Guru (Diksa) is usually not to be give up but for the two specific reasons can be renounced. Firstly, when the disciple ignorantly accepts without any examination a Guru without consideration of his spiritual advancement and knowledge together with, whether or not he observes Vaisnava etiquette and conduct. Later, when he understands his own dilemma and that no spiritual merit can be accomplished, that spiritual master needs naturally to be rejected. Narada Pancaratra's verdict:-

*yo vyakti nyāyarahitam anyāyena sṛṇoti yaḥ
 tāvubhau narakāni ghorāni vrajataḥ kālam akṣayam*

One who speaks in a manner contrary to the revealed conclusions of scripture and the disciple who strictly upholds such distorted conclusions, will both go down to the darkest well of hellish existence.

The second reason by which a disciple can be allowed to reject the initiating Guru is the instance when at the time of initiation the Guru could have been very pure of conduct and learned in Vaisnava conclusions. Gradually, by force of bad association, he may become converted to be an Impersonalist or a reviler of the Vaisnavas (blasphemous). Such a spiritual master should be rejected. If one's spiritual master is neither an offender of the Vaisnavas, an Impersonalist or attached to sinful activities, then it is not warranted to reject such spiritual master simply on the grounds of his insufficient knowledge.

Rather, the proper etiquette is to keep adoring him as spiritual master but to take permission graciously from him to approach another great self-realized soul for "Siksha" and to learn the higher spiritual truths from such an instructing spiritual master.

In the Hari Bhakti Vilas, the symptoms of a genuine Guru, one posing as a Guru including the characteristics of a disciple, have been elaborately explained at length. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes, one of model character and strong faith is eligible to become a disciple. Similarly, the genuine Guru is of saintly character, understands the devotional conclusions, simple, not greedy in the least, free from any tinge of impersonalism and naturally expert in all activities. Generally a brahmin possessing all good qualities can accept disciples from other castes. In the absence of such brahmins however, devotees from other castes who are spiritually advanced can be selected as Guru. The basis of this injunction overrules ordinary 'varnasrama' rules regarding superiority on the basis of seminal birth. One who understands the science of the Supreme Lord is eligible to become a spiritual master. The usual caste brahmins at most may be able to get some extra material facilities by their superior birth, but the pure devotee can truly function as Guru. The scriptures have specific rules according to as and when the disciple may be accepted in the light of trial. The fact of the matter is when the Guru sees the disciple as a fit candidate and when the disciple has strong faith in the purity of his Guru, then only will the flow of mercy take place between the Guru and the disciple. The 'Hari Bhakti Vilas' mentions that a person who eats too much, procrastinates, is greedy for things not in connection with Śrī Krishna, argumentative (in connection with this, Jamini, Sugata, Nastika, Vagna, Kapila and Gautama with their followers are persons who practice argumentation-hetuvada), Wicked nature, strongly critical as well as relishing the misdemeanors of others, defamer, serves unworthy people, black teeth, black lips, who has foul odor

emanating from his mouth, has bad qualities, found of amassing goods even though already having a sufficient amount, without hair or with excess hair are not the symptoms befitting an 'Acarya' (teacher). All of one's wealth and opulence will diminish in the acceptance of such an unqualified Guru. In Mantra Muktabali, the appropriate qualities of a disciple are described. He should be born in a good family, be modest, opulent, possessed of loving disposition, truthful of pure character, very intelligent, free from arrogance, have given up lust and anger, surrendered to his Guru, with his mind, body and words always devoted to the Supreme Lord, free from disease, freed from all kinds all sinful activities, sincere in honoring his elders and brahmins, of controlled senses, very youthful and compassionate. All these qualities make one eligible to be a disciple.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam it is stated :-

*amāñyamatsaro dakṣo nirmamo dṛḍsauhrdaḥ
asatvarohārtha jijñāsur anusuyara amoghavāk*

(11/10/6)

The servant of the guru should be free from pride, not lazy or egoistic with the sense of 'me' and 'mine' in relation with wife and children, very devoted to Guru, not negligent, devoted to inquiry about the Supreme Truth, free from enviousness, not wasting time in loose conversations; all these qualities are befitting a disciple. On the other hand, in Agastya Samhita, the symptoms of an unworthy disciple are described as one who is lazy, dirty, who endeavors uselessly, naughty, miserly, poor, sickly, afflicted with diseases, attached to sense objects, eager for sense-delights, envious, gazes lustfully at other's wives, shows enmity to learned people, foolish, prides himself to be highly scholarly, fallen in his vows, struggles to earn his livelihood, probes at others faults, bent on the downfall of others, glutton, always engaged in vile actions, sinful and not very willing to give up such despicable behavior and who cannot hear the beneficial

instructions of Śrī Guru; all these people are definitely not eligible to become disciples. If being tempted by greed, the spiritual master ventures to initiate all such unworthy people, he will incur the wrath of the demigods, consequently, being bereft of all wealth and opulence. Not only that, he will have to go to the hellish planets after which he will take birth in the animal species. Therefore, one has to be careful not to accept disciples of this type.

The standing injunction is that the guru should examine a disciple for at least one year.

*tayor vat sarvāsena jñātānyonya svabhāvayor
gurutā śiṣyatā ceti nānyathaiveti niścayaḥ*

The Guru should carefully examine his disciple while staying together with him and observing his qualities and character to judge whether he can be a fit candidate. Similarly, the disciple should examine the Guru accordingly. Other than this, there is no other alternative way of knowing this fact. Without this recommended stipulation, one should not agreeably give initiation to any one on mere request. Further, there are spiritual statements to the effect that just as a King is responsible for his subjects having to suffer for their wrong actions, the man for the sins of his wedded wife, in the same manner the sins committed by the disciples will have to be borne by the spiritual master. Hence one has to be careful of awarding initiation to an unqualified person. Notwithstanding, a powerful spiritually oriented person is not restricted by any scripture and does not have to consider who is worthy or unworthy. A fortunate person on receiving his benign glance can be nullified of many births of sinful activities and will be able to make rapid progress by the impetus of the Holy Names. The mercy of Śrīla Haridas Ṭhākura in a lonely forest was such that even a prostitute was converted by his purity. A Musulman tailor became perfect by helping to sow the cloth of Srivas Pandit. By the incredible mercy of Śrīla Saranga Murari, a dead body was infused with life and

later became his own disciple. Śrīla Rasikananda Thākura's compassion was such that even material objects were invigorated with consciousness and ordinary forest animals became blessed to chant the Holy Names. Thus the potential self-effulgent 'Acarya' can surcharge others with energy, himself remaining unchanged in power and not affected in any way. In Hari Bhakti Vilas too, description about service to the spiritual master is mentioned.

The Kurma Purana explains, the disciple has constantly to carry the water pot of the Guru, pluck the sacrificial ingredients like khusa grass, kusum, etc. as a menial servant of his Guru. He should always clean the temple of his spiritual master, anoint the body of his guru with sandalwood and wash his cloth. The garlands, resting place, sandals, sitting cloth (asana), eating utensils and the shadow of Śrīla Gurudeva should never be stepped over or treated with disrespect. One should not go out anywhere without the guru's permission. One should always engage in activities dear to the spiritual master. One should never point or stretch his legs in the direction of Śrīla Gurudeva. In proximity to him, yawning, loud laughter and loud exclamations should be given up, also the practice of cracking of one's knuckles. Furthermore, the son of the spiritual master, his wife, relatives or other acquaintance should be treated with equal respect. In Devi Tantra, Lord Siva says, the resting place of the spiritual master, his seating place, sandals, foot-rest, palanquin, bath-water and shadow should never be slighted or utilized. One should never worship any third person in front of Śrīla Gurudeva, nor should one try to equate oneself with him. In front of him, one should renounce erudite expositions of the scriptures nor maintain a superior attitude in relation with him. Also, he should never give spiritual initiation to others while the spiritual master is present.

In Devya Agama, Narada Rsi states, whenever one

obtains the vision of Śrīla Gurudeva, he should immediately, with folded hands, fall down in prostrated obeisances (like a falling tree) to the Guru. In no event should he be contemptible to the instructions of his Guru. The Manu Smṛti states, that one indirectly or out of hearing should not address the Guru by his first name or try to imitate his movement, speech and mannerisms. One should maintain his humble stance as the disciple of his Guru on the occasion of the Guru being in proximity with his Guru. One should not even go to the house of one's parents if it doesn't meet with the Guru's approval. In Narada Pancaratra, the way in which the name of the spiritual master is to be utilized is explained. One should never simply utter the syllables of the Guru's name, disrespectfully or carelessly at any time or place. With a bowed head and folded hands, one should firstly, with the pranam 'om', then with the title 'IOŚ' complete with the word 'visnu pada' has to be uttered, before mentioning his name respectfully. It is also stated that one should never advise the spiritual master on any matter nor should he breach the instructions laid out by him. One should not eat anything that has not been offered to Śrī Guru nor should he eat any food without his prior permission. On the arrival of the spiritual master, instantly one should bow in front of him reverently and should accompany respectfully when he is walking. One should never remain seated on a pedestal or asana in front of him. Whatever is very dear to oneself should be first offered to the spiritual master and only after being granted by the guru, should he utilize it for himself. In Visnu Smṛti it is said even when threatened or oppressed by the spiritual master, one should never cause him any pain in return. One should never criticize him in any way or work against his welfare. In the event of the disciple not engaging in the service of the guru even after taking the holy syllables and by the guru not having examined the disciple before, both are liable for punishment, being guilty. Narada Pancaratra states in this regard,

yo vyakti nyā yarahitam anyāyena śṛṇoti yaḥ

Śrīla Sanatana Gosvāmī writes in the Bhakti Hari Vilas:-

*parikṣāṁ binā gurusevādināṁ binā ca mantrasya kathane
grhane ca mahānārtha itī likhati yo vaktiti*

In not going through the preliminary examination period, both the guru and the disciple face the prospect of going to a terrible hell for a long time. As stated in Agamas, the son of a born-brahmin, without going through the ritual of upanayana (brahmin thread) is not allowed to worship either the Salagrama Sila or study the Vedas. In the same way, the uninitiated person is not allowed to worship the Deity with the uttering of Mantras. For this process, one has to undergo the rite of initiation. The commentary by Śrīla Sanatana Gosvāmī runs :-

*pradhānatvena śrī-viṣṇudikṣāgrahanāt śrī-śivasyāpi
samyak stutiviṣayam itī bhāvah.*

In the way Lord Visnu is the Supreme Lord, one who undergoes initiation into the Visnu Mantra, is even praiseworthy by the best of all devotees - Lord Siva. In Visnu Yamala it is even mentioned that for any uninitiated person, all his works will go to naught. One who does not undergo spiritual initiation is destined for animal births. Diksa (initiation) is termed by the knowers of the truth as that which destroys all sins and gives transcendental knowledge. In Tattva Sagara, just as bell metal is converted by a chemical process into gold, similarly by the process of initiation, all human beings attain to brahminhood.

*yathā kāñchanatāṁ yāti kāmśyanī rasavidhānathah
tīnta dikṣāvidhānena dvijatvaṁ jāyate nṛṇām*

Śrīla Sanatana Gosvāmī writes nṛṇām sarvesameva vijatvam viprata. By the process of spiritual initiation one attains the brahminhood. One who desires the highest goal should take to spiritual initiation under a bona fide

spiritual master and practice devotional service to the Lord. All beings have a right for devotion to the Lord, it being the eternal constitutional function of the soul.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam Lord Krishna informs his brahmin friend (Bhag 10/50/34):

*nāham iṣyā prajyātibyaṁ tapas upaśamena vā
tuṣyeyāṁ sarvabhūtātma guru śuśruṣayā yathā*

The way I become satisfied with a person who is devoted and cent per cent obedient to his guru is far more than just following their filial duties according to their different stage of life like celibate monk, householder, renounced order, etc.. The great soul Prahlad Mahārāja instructs his fellow companions and friends. (Bhag 7/7/10)

guru śuśruṣayā bhaktya sarva lobharpanena ca

One in forgoing all motives for fame and false prestige in the mood of a servant, in humble submission and surrender to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru will gain firm attraction to the lotus feet of the Lord. Nothing is greater than service to Śrī Guru which is the highest religious principle. All the evil tendencies like lust and anger including all impurities can be easily dissipated by pure devotion to the Guru. The 11th Vilas, Hari Bhakti Vilas describes the service to please the Guru is the foremost of all vows. Padma Purana informs us that one who worships his spiritual master above his own father will definitely be a guest in the world of Brahma. In other places we have the Guru is himself Lord Brahma. He is Lord Visnu and He is Sankara also, He is comparable to the Supreme Brahman which entails that all should worship him. In Vamana Kalpe, Lord Brahma describes : *yo mantrati, sa guruh, ksat yo guroh sa hari smrtah*, The mantra is the form of the spiritual master and the guru is the form of Lord Hari. To whom the guru is pleased, Lord Hari becomes pleased with him. One should not sit on the same sitting place or even on a higher level than the

spiritual master. The spiritual master is the sum total of all demigods, also he is verily the form of Śrī Hari but in all respects considered the most confidential servitor of the Lord. The Supreme Lord, to teach us the method of practice of devotional service, has appeared externally in the form of Śrīla Gurudeva, also demonstrating the proper course of conduct. The Supreme Lord illuminates the truth of himself by his mercy potency who is Śrīla Gurudeva, His confidential associate. Just as we pray to Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda with the prayer as :-

Śrī gaura karuna sakti vigrahaya namaḥ tu te.

In the verse tad-vijnanartham sa gurum eva abhigacet, 'tad vijnana' here means knowledge of the Supreme Lord. To illustrate further in Gita, the verse "tad-viddhi paripatena" states to get knowledge of the Supreme Lord, one should approach and take shelter of the spiritual master. The spiritual master is always exhibiting the most appropriate example, for he is engaged eternally in the service of the Deity as in dressing the Deity etc. and also cleaning the temple etc.

In this way he engages all his devoted followers in such spiritual services. He is expert in helping the sakhis in the delightful conjugal pastimes of the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā Krishna and is very dear to Them. Such a spiritual master is my most worshipping object. In doing service to Śrī Gurudeva, if it limits the service to Śrī Krishna, the guru can never be pleased. Tulasi leaves are to be offered only in his hand in his position as confidential servitor of the Lord. Śrī Tulasi Devi is free to serve the pure devotee according to her own accord, but it is not within our authority to place a pure devotee of Lord Krishna on the feet of another confidential servitor. In showing oneself as being too clever would result in the spiritual master becoming vexed. The scriptures have declared that if the spiritual Lord becomes angry with any disciple, the spiritual master as intermediary can pacify the Lord and save the disciples. Conversely, on the Guru

becoming angry, nobody can save that person. Hence, one should always try to please the spiritual master; *yasya prasada bhagavat prasada yasya prasada na gatih kuto api*. If the spiritual master becomes pleased then the Lord becomes pleased and if the Guru becomes displeased then there is no destination for that wretched person. The disciple should be vigilant that by some strict of enviousness, he does not deem his Guru offensively to be an ordinary mortal.

In (Bhag 7/15/26) Narada Rsi quotes:

*yasya sākṣad bhagavaty jñāna dipaprade gurau
martyasādhiḥ śrutānī tasya sarvāni kuñjarah śauchavat.*

In viewing his spiritual master as an ordinary mortal, all what the disciple has learned or heard from his spiritual master, including the Mantras received will be null and void just as the example of the futile bathing of the elephant, for the spiritual master is the external manifestation of Lord Visnu and the deliver of transcendental knowledge. The disciple should be very attentive and submissive to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru at all times, by both inquiry and service in receiving the divine messages of the Ancient Religion (Bhagavad-dharma) from him. Gradually in this way he will make progress in devotions. Even after the disappearance of Śrīla Gurudeva, his surrendered disciple will always receive his shower of mercy unobserved by others. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda is always fond of the servant of his servant and is always protecting such a person at all times. Though he is in his eternal pastimes engaged in the blissful service of the Divine Couple, he is fondly showering the weak disciples with his mercy at every step. This merciful potency is always protecting me and awarding me complete fearlessness. Thus it is with a happy note to mention that I am not without shelter. He does not neglect me in spite of many faults committed unknowingly at his lotus feet. He will never forsake me ever. He is the ocean of mercy without limit. In his

presence whilst in this planet, he has even shed tears for me seeing my ignorance and even now he is being most compassionate in this regard. His deep affection for me is still flowing and is not restricted because he is not physically present. Certainly he will protect me always as he is doing now and has done previously. He is my Lord birth after birth and not only this brief life-span. He is my worshippable deity and I am his eternal servant of the servant. In my making mistakes, would he not discipline me? Definitely! Just as a mother annoyed at seeing the naughty pranks of her child gives him a slap but after, while seeing the boy crying, will she be able to sit unaffected? In the same way, even after chiding me, can my eternal master even neglect me? After my rectification, he will definitely award me the shade of his lotus feet which are cooling as a million moons. I have no other destination except for his lotus feet. To those who are bereft and lowly, his lotus feet are the only fearless shelter. In the three worlds, what else can be more painful than separation from him! Who else can look after me in this loving fashion, Oh merciful Prabhupāda! I am the eternal servant of the servitor of your lotus feet. Please accept me as the dust of the dust of your lotus feet.

THE MERCY OF THE VAISHNAVAS PRESENT ALL PERFECTION

Śrīla Vrndavana dās Ṭhākura has written in his
Caitanya bhāgavat (M 21/21)
*bhāgavat, tulasi, gāṅgaya, bhaktajane
caturdhā vigraha kṛṣṇa ei cāri sane*

The book Bhāgavat, pure devotees, Tulasi plant and the River Ganga—these four are related to the Lord as part of His manifestations or 'tadiya' - His own spiritual paraphernalia. Especially, only after the installation of the Deity with proper rites can one engage in worshipping the Deity. But these four are naturally worshippingable for they do not have to be infused with consciousness as in the usual procedures of installation for they are all transcendental objects in themselves and not like the ordinary material paraphernalia. The service to these paraphernalia of Śrī Krishna is one of the sixty-four limbs of devotion. The five main limbs of devotion are stated as follows:

Residence in the land of Mathura
Association with the devotees
Chanting of the Holy Names
Hearing the holy book Bhāgavat
Service to the Deity with faith

Even a little practice in any of these five limbs can invoke devotion to Śrī Krishna. The service to the 'tadiya' of the Lord has an unbroken relation with these five limbs as well as the other limbs. Without the association of pure devotees and their service, no limb of devotional service can in any way be followed at all:-

*ārādhanaṅgāṇāṁ sarveṣāṁ viṣṇor ārādhanaṁ param
tasmāt paratarāṁ devī tadyānāṁ samārcanam*

Oh Devi, of all the worship, the most superior is worship of Lord Vishnu but the worship of His

paraphernalia is even higher than this.

*acayitvā tu govindam tadiyan nārchayetuyah
na sa bhāgavato jñeyah kevalam dāmbikah smṛtah*

One who worships Lord Govinda but does not engage in worshipping His devotees or paraphernalia cannot be considered a high-level devotee. He is at most only a haughty devotee.

In worshipping Lord Govinda without properly adoring Tulasi Devi or neglecting Tulasi Devi, that type of worship will never be accepted by Lord Govinda. The Supreme Lord is very affectionate to His devotees and He is overcome by their love for Him. therefore only in pleasing such unalloyed devotees will the Lord become pleased. Lord Krishna Himself says that those who consider themselves My devotee, I do not consider them as such but the devotee of My devotee is the top-level devotee of Mine. (reference Adi-Purana)

*ye me bhakta-janah pārtha na me bhaktas ca te janāḥ
mad-bhaktānāḥ ca ye bhaktaste me bhaktatamā matāḥ*

Mahārāja Prataparudra had great devotion and regard for Raya Ramananda. In seeing this, Śrīman Mahāprabhu began to happily praise him as a great devotee, telling him that Lord Krishna will definitely accept him seeing his mood of adoration to this pure devotee.

Uddhava, on expressing his earnest desire to understand the pure devotional service to Śrī Krishna was met with this reply from the Supreme Lord Himself:

*ādarah paricaryāyām sarvāṅgairabhivandanam
mad-bhaktah-pūjāsvadhikā sarva-bhūteṣu man-matīḥ
mad-athesv aṅga ceṣṭā ca vacasā mad-guṇeraṇam
mayy arpanam ca manasaḥ sarva kāma-vivarjonam
Bhag. 11/19/21-22*

One should honor My dearest servants and glorify them with all one's limbs. To worship My devotees is even

more important than My worship. While honoring all living entities with an equal mind, one should endeavor for Me and sing of My glories with one's speech. He should surrender his mind to Me and give up all desires not in relation with Me.

All this activities belongs to the realm of pure devotional service. Service to the pure devotees is only attained after the merit gained by life times of pious activities.

After hearing of the nectarine pastimes of Lord Krishna from Matileva Muni, Mahatma Vidura was cleared of his doubts and remarked:

*durāpā hyalpa tapasaḥ sevā vaikuṇṭha vartmasu
yatra upagiyate nityaṁ deva devo janārdanaḥ*

The service to those great souls who always glorify Lord Janardana, Śrī Krishna are not attained by a person who has little pious activities or meager pious activities to his credit.

Listening to the topics of the Lord from realized souls will awaken one's latent love for Lord Hari and the result will be a dwindling implication in the bodily concept of life. There is no other way to obtain devotion than the constant association of realized devotees and this association will be beneficial by adding merit in furtherance of pure devotion. Therefore, one with little merit or pious activities to his credit will not be able to have unflinching faith in these four Spiritual articles like the remnants of the Lord's prasadam, the Supreme Lord Govinda, the Holy Names, and the pure devotees. This verse is verified from the Padma Purana.

Śrīla Jiva Goswami has written in his Bhakti Sandarbha that as long as the heart of the living entity is filled with impurities, till that time his proper steadiness and understanding about Spiritual Truths will not arise, plus with his corresponding weak faith, the proper mood

of honoring his spiritual master will not manifest. More often than not, in this situation being under the influence of his mind and body, with misguided faith in a bogus instructing 'guru' the unfortunate living entity will be propelled headlong in hellish wombs.

At one time, King Nimi of Videha became overjoyed to see the unexpected arrival of the Nine great sages (Nava Yogendra) at his sacrificial arena. After worshipping them properly according to their position, he quoted this verse with devotion.

*durlabho mānuṣyo deho dehināṁ kṣaṇa bhaṅguraḥ
 tatrāpi durlabham manye vaikuṇṭha priya darśanam
 atah ātyantikam kṣemam prcchāmi bhagavato anaghāḥ
 sanisāro'smin kṣaṇa ārdho pi sat-saṅgaḥ śevadinṛṇām*
 (Bhag 11/2/29-30)

To obtain this temporary miserable body is considered to be very difficult but even more than that is the vision of the pure devotee of the Lord. In this temporary material world, for one to obtain the association of high caliber saints like your good selves, even for a moment is the greatest treasure and source of bliss for ordinary human beings.

These nine great saints had grasped all the imports of the scriptures faithfully and were in a position to answer the deep questions of King Nimi for they were replete with high personal character and codes of conduct, as befitting highly realized souls.

The self-realized person is one who has grasped all the hidden truths of scriptures by way of personal example and practice and imparts such spiritual instruction to others. The external self-effulgent manifestations of the Lord are present in the form of Guru and the pure devotees. Without deep devotion to their lotus feet, one can scarcely hope to uncover the deep imports of the scriptures. As stated by Svetasvara Sruti, for one who has unflinching faith in the spiritual master

and the Supreme Lord, all the purports of the scriptures will be revealed instantly. Without the mercy of Śrī Guru, the mercy of the devotees is not possible and without the mercy of the devotees and the spiritual master, where is the question of mercy of the Supreme Lord? Without having close association or rapport with the spiritual master, one will not be able to distinguish as to who the actual Vaishnava is and due to association with the non-devotees will result in one's falling headlong into hellish life. The bona fide guru is self-controlled and well-versed in scriptures, at the same time he is fixed in pure devotional service to the Lord. Due to grave offenses like intermingling with women or non-devotees, therefore, one who is not of controlled passions, devoid of knowledge of devotion and indifferent to the chanting of the Holy Names will be completely unfit for taking the position of Guru. The iron, when not treated with intense heat, will not loose its impurities, similarly the effulgent spiritual master is like a blazing fire in the sense of possessing transcendental knowledge and devoid of his sublime instructions, the witch of illusion will surely devour us and no deliverance will be possible. Here, the witch implied is the desire for sensual enjoyment and liberation which has been described by Śrīla Rupa Goswami;

Śrīla Jagadananda Pandit in "Prema Vivarta", has implored us to give up the association of non-devotees, which in turn leads to desires for sensual enjoyment, mystic powers and liberation and take to the association of pure devotees, with the chanting of the Holy Names. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja in Chaitanya Charitamrita verifies this when he states that all desires like sense enjoyment and liberation does not lead to the promised goal, which is devotion to God. The highest religious principles are enunciated by the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam from the verse *dharmam projjito kaitava atra parama nirmatsaram satam*, which denotes that religion, economic development, desires for sensual enjoyment are all cheating tendencies

to be avoided, while liberation is the greatest cheating tendency which will tend to nullify devotion altogether. Śrīla Sridhar Swami has declared the word 'pro' is used to especially decry all cheating tendencies like formal religion, economic development, sense gratification and liberation which should be given up completely. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja further states that obstructions to pure devotion lie within the form of carrying out every kind of pious and impious work. Only the causeless mercy of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nityananda can cause all the darkness of ignorance to vanish and the truth of pure devotion to sprout. Śrīla Rupa Goswami's verse: "anyabilasita sunyam" is consistent with our present discussion. The main limb of the practice (abhideya) of devotional service is chanting of the Holy Names, which requires the proper association of pure devotees for perfection to result. On the contrary, in the association of those pursuing sense enjoyment, mystic powers and liberation even after many births of striving, the hearing and chanting will have little effect. As in SB (1/10/11), the verse states that the learned man, in giving up of bad association altogether and hearing the nectarine fame and qualities of the Supreme Lord in the association of saintly devotees will never be able to forget him.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja gives the commentary of the verse from Śrīmad Bhagavad Gita "catur viddha bhajante mam" meaning four types of people worship the Lord namely: the inquisitive, the distressed, one who desires wealth and the learned persons. All these classes of people can be divided into those aspiring for sense gratification and those desiring liberation. An example of the distressed is the elephant Gajendra who, in his precarious plight on being attacked by a huge crocodile, prayed to the Lord in intense despair. The second category is devotees like Dhruva who was tainted with the ambition to be ruler of a planet and amass prestige and opulence. The inquisitive category is saints like Saunaka who desired eagerly to understand self-knowledge. The intelligent, learned

people like Uddhava form the fourth class. All these four categories of people may gain favorable merit in taking to devotions but for them the only way to pure devotion is to renounce completely all desires up to liberation. Here, we have seen that these four categories of people who seek God are under the influence of material impurities like material enjoyment and liberation which are not ideal for pure devotion. Only in rejecting all these can the desire for pure devotion be evolved. Further, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Kāvīraja has rejected all these cheating tendencies of the common four-fold aims of human life, so much so, other than Lord Krishna and His pure devotion, everything else is ignorance (ajñānārambhaṁ). Maintaining association with people of these kind of cheating tendencies are considered bad association and one, by keeping such bad association, will not be able to attain success in devotion, even after many millions of births. In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.10.16)

*tato duḥsaṅgān utsrjya satsu sajjeta buddhimān
santa evāsy chindanti manovyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ*

The sober person should take right association while rejecting bad association. The spiritual aspirants, by the sublime instructions of the pure devotees, are able to forgo or renounce all desires unfavorable for devotional service.

As Lord Kapila informs mother Devahūti that by hearing the topics of the Supreme Lord in the association of the devotees, first faith results, gradually leading after practice to spontaneous devotional moods and finally ending in love of Godhead.

*satām prasaṅgām manā virya saṁvido bhavanti
hṛtkarṇarasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
tad joṣaṇād āśvapaṭvarga vartmani śraddhā rati bhaktir
anukramiṣyati* (SB 3/25/22)

In the association of My saintly persons, one should discuss My Holy Names, nectarine pastimes and glories. In hearing such pastimes gradually steady faith will be developed and by purification natural attraction to Me

will result leading to the ultimate goal: love of Godhead.

In the way in which one takes association of saintly people, in the same way their influence will affect us positively, just as the effect of the ancient touchstone. The right association has to be chosen with sober intelligence and discrimination, in not to be cheated of the final result. 1 second=11 lavas or 1 lava is 1/11 of a second in fraction. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja has remarked that even in this fraction of a second, the association of saintly people can give perfection or lead to it e.i. lava matra sadhu sange sarva siddhi haya. In conclusion, only the mercy of the spiritual master and the pure devotees and their good association can result in the discarding of all impurities and result in the arousal of devotion. Many verses in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam too, give evidence stating the need for the association of pure devotees in order to make spiritual advancement as opposed to simply practices of self-vows, morality, austerity, piety, knowledge, etc. (5/12/12 SB). Success is only possible by humble submission at the lotus feet of a pure devotee. On the other hand, in association with materialistic workers or dry scholars, the heart becomes tainted with such desires of sense-enjoyment and liberation. Work, knowledge and mystic yoga are not conducive for pure devotion, conversely devotional service is independent of these processes. None of these former processes can give any finite results. Only the process of devotion can bestow love of Godhead and is complete in itself being independent of all other paths.

Lord Krishna has told Uddhava that whatever perfection may be obtained by other various practices, My devotees can easily obtain all these fruits. But he rejects them with disdain in favor of the bliss of pure devotional service. Those who nurture these other unwanted desires cannot be called "pure devotees" or "tadiya" of the Lord. Thus the intending aspirants have to be careful to serve these spiritual paraphernalia "tadiya" of the Lord in order

to progress in devotions. In Caitanya Caritamṛta it is stated, one will attain the wealth of pure devotion, if he succeeds in the offenceless chanting of the Holy Names. If one strays from 'nama-bhajan' to seek the shelter of other processes then this is not worthwhile, for chanting of the Holy Names in devotional service is able to award all perfection. To take the Holy Names continuously is the best way to steer clear of offenses and approach the final goal. The fruits of devotion will not mature in the process of committing offenses. (SB 2/3/10)

*akāmaḥ sarva kamo vā mokṣa kāma uddhārādhiḥ
tivreṇa bhakti yogena yajeta puruṣaṁ param*

"Whether one is desireless or full of desires or if he aspires for liberation, still one should worship the Supreme Lord unswervingly through devotional service".

Śrīla Visvanath Cakravarti Ṭhākura has enlightened us by declaring that 'tivreṇa' (intense) used in this context means to be freed from the effects of knowledge, fruitive activity or mixture of any of the unwanted processes. Once, Śrīla Ramacandra at the unexpected arrival of Vibhisana, brother of Ravana, told His devotee Sugriva that, "It is My vow that if anyone person sincerely says "I am Yours" in a surrendered mood, then I am ready always to give him all protection".

*kṛṣṇa kalā—āmā bhaje, māge viṣaya-sukha
amṛta cāḍi viṣa-māge—ei baḍa murkha*

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in his commentary on the above verse, writes:- Improper actions and bad association may give rise to all the different desires like liberation, mystic power and sense-enjoyment in the individual, yet by the guidance of the saintly people all these obnoxious desires can be renounced in the favor of pure devotional service. Therefore by sudden fortunate association with the holy persons in cultivating devotional service, even if no previous inclination for devotion was there nevertheless, the causeless mercy of Lord Krishna comes

into play in awarding them the pure result. Lord Krishna Himself says, "Presently this foolish person is worshipping Me with desires for sensual enjoyment, rejecting the nectar which I can give and wanting poison instead. Due to gross ignorance, he cannot desire properly, however, I being very enlightened will make him forget his desires for sense gratification by giving him the nectar of My lotus feet". The most superior birth among the different species is this human birth in the land of Bharata varsha which is the doorway to the spiritual world. The Supreme Lord Hari has in His advent, described to the world at large the nectar of tasting pure devotional mellows.

*satyam diśaty arthitam arthito nṛṇām
nava arthado yat punararthitā yataḥ
svayam vidhate bhajanam anicchatām
iccha api dhānam nija pāda pallavam*

By worshipping Śrī Krishna, inevitably, the aspirations of all worshippers of the Supreme Lord becomes satisfied. Still, when something has to be requested again and again, that desire he does not fulfill but instead gives him the nectar of His own lotus feet thereby pacifying these ignorant people of their lusty desires.

*kāma lāgi kṛṣṇe bhaje, pāya kṛṣṇa rase
kāma-cāḍi dāsa hoite haya abhilāṣe*

Srila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comments:- When a person, with trifling desires makes even the slight endeavor to perform devotional service in the association of devotees, he will slowly lose his former lusty aspirations and get the taste for devotional service. Devotional service is so extremely potent that in executing this constantly, he will again attempt to forgo all lusty desires altogether and relish simply to be the servant of Lord Krishna.

Dhruva, in his prayers to Lord Krishna, says, "Oh

Lord, I was engaged in great austerities being desirous of a high position but by good fortune I have obtained You who are not known by the demigods and great sages. This is like in my search for a piece of stone, I have unraveled a valuable diamond. I am thereby grateful for this and therefore I desire nothing else from You”.

One can be released from all kinds of unwanted desires in possessing these three essential items: the association of the pure devotees, the mercy of Lord Krishna and pure devotional service. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja has examined the positive influence of pure devotion on great souls who were naturally self-realized. Śrīla Sukadeva Goswami, though a self-realized soul, became entranced by the verses of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam he had heard from his father, that he began to seriously engage in the study of this holy scripture under his father's tutelage. The four Kumaras were great impersonalists but by smelling the fragrant Tulasi leaves offered to the lotus feet of Śrī Krishna, their minds became diverted and they began experiencing symptoms of devotional ecstasy. The nine sages (Navayogendras) were born self-realized, advanced in spiritual knowledge, but hearing the nectarine topics of Lord Krishna from the lips of Lord Brahma, Lord Siva and Sri Narada made them become completely absorbed in the transcendental qualities of Lord Krishna.

The verse “atmaramasca munayo” of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam states that even the self-realized souls free from all mundane desires and delighting in their selves will eventually, practice devotion to the Supreme Lord. This is the unique quality of Lord Krishna who can steal the mind of all. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja has described that the most intelligent people (uddharadhiḥ), will take to devotional service by faith and be purged of all their unwanted desires by being in favor of serving the spiritual senses of Lord Hari while, all those with their deviant desires are implicated by ‘lust’. Thus the broad-minded person (uddharadhiḥ) is one who knows how to practice

pure devotion to the Supreme Lord. Pure devotional service is not tinged with any desire and is the only way to attain to the spiritual world as the verse of Gita states, "bhakty mam abhijananti yavan casmi tattvatah" and for this the association of pure devotees is very necessary.

DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION (SAMPRADĀYA)

The meaning of 'sampradāya' is defined as knowledge descending in the chain of consecutive spiritual masters, other than this definition it can be used to denote societies, associations and groups of people. Śrīmad Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, in his "Prameya Ratnāvalī", has written :-

bhavati vicintyā viduṣa niravakarā guru paramparā nityam
ekāntitvam sidhyati yayodayati yena haritosah

That the learned scholars and devotees should always meditate on the bona fide disciplic succession. Only by doing likewise can one maintain himself as an unalloyed devotee of the Lord and will become the recipient of the mercy of the Supreme Lord. The constant discussion of the exemplary pure devotional conduct of the predecessor "Ācāryas" will result in the purification of the heart of the disciple. Consequently, only in the unalloyed role of the servant of the servant can the purified disciple be freed from false ego and earn the grace of the Supreme Lord. The unalloyed devotees are the beloved of Śrī Hari and specifically those in direct obedience to them, without the least form of artifice can hope to attain the mercy of the Lord. This is the prime reason why the initiated disciple should always meditate with faith on the disciplic succession. Śrīla Baladeva Prabhu too has enlightened us of his own spiritual roots in his book "Prameya Ratnāvalī". In that book he has mentioned two important verses for discussion, from Padma Purana.

*sampradāya vihinā ye mantrāste viphalā matāḥ
atā kalau bhaviṣyanti catvāraḥ sampradāyinaḥ
śrī brahmā-rudra-sanakā vaiṣṇavāḥ kṣiti pāvanāḥ
catvāraste kalau bhāvya utkale puruṣottamāt*

Meaning :- The holy formula (mantra) that is received without the proper disciplic succession will never bear

any fruit. This is why in this age of Kali, four great souls will emerge and establish the different Vaishnava successions in the form of Śrī Brahmā, Rudra and four Kumaras. The four great leaders will begin to manifest their four authorized disciplic successions from the holy Dhām of Purī. Originally, Śrī Lakṣmi Devī had given this sacred knowledge to Rāmānujācārya, Lord Brahma to Śrī Madhva, Rudra to Viṣṇu Swami and the Four Kumaras to Nimbarkācārya. They, after being endowed with spiritual knowledge, promulgated their own individual disciplic successions.

There is no chance of perfection of the mantra received if no implicit obedience to the previous spiritual masters exists. Thus the four great spiritual masters have preached the different tenets of Vaishnava philosophy accordingly namely, non-duality with particular attributes (Viśiṣṭadvaita) by Śrī Ramanuja, pure duality (suddhadvaita) of Śrī Madhva, pure non-duality (suddhadvaita) of Viṣṇu Swami and instantaneous oneness and difference (dvaitadvaita) of Nimbarka Swami.

Śrī Rāmānuja, who propagated the principles of viśiṣṭadvaita was born in Śrī Perembudure about 13 crores from Madras. He lived to a ripe old age of 120 years old, propagating the worship of Śrī Lakṣmi Nārāyaṇa. Śrīman Madhva was born in Udupi and he, preaching the doctrine of pure duality also stressed the aspect of devotion to Śrī Krishna as the ultimate. The one who inaugurated pure Non-duality was reputed to have been born in the Andhra Province of South India. He outlined service to Śrī Rādhā-Krishna as his main theme. Ācārya Nimbarka was born in Mungera Pattan village, of the devout couple Aruni Rṣi and Jayanti Devī and he propagated the philosophy of devotional service to Krishna with his base as the philosophy of Simultaneous Oneness and Difference. Many scholars have pointed out Śrī Viṣṇu Swami to have his roots other than that above mentioned Andhra Province. Actually, few of such persons, have been specifically

attributed to that name. Whatever the conflicting opinions are on this issue, the four great leaders, taking shelter of Lord Jagannatha in Purī dhama, have begun to preach their various doctrines according to their disciplic succession. Śrīmad Kṛṣṇadeva Vedantavagisa, in his commentary on Śrī Vidyābhuṣaṇa's "Prameya Ratnāvalī", has written :- Without having recourse to the holy syllables (mantra) received through the bona fide spiritual master and via the authorized disciplic succession, there is no question of liberation. Here both the shelter of the spiritual master as well as the proper disciplic succession have been stressed. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa, a prominent Gaudiya Vedanta scholar, has shed light on this disciplic succession.

The most worshippingable Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa, a great Vedantic scholar has admitted himself as belonging to the Lord Brahma disciplic lineage. Lord Śrī Krishna was the original spiritual master, His disciple was Lord Brahma. Lord Brahma's disciple was Nārada Rṣi. Then on to Śrī Vyāsadeva whose disciple was Śrī Madhva. From Śrī Madhva the succession continued through Śrī Akshobya, Śrī Jayatirtha, Śrī Jñāna Sindhu, Śrī Daya Niddhi, Śrī Vidyā Nidhi, Śrī Rajendra, Śrī Jaya Dharma, Śrī Puruṣottama then to Śrī Brahmanya to Śrī Vyāsathirtha, Śrī Laksmipati and finally to Śrī Mādhavendra Purī. Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī's distinguished disciples were Īśvara Purī, Śrī Nityānanda and Śrī Advaita. The illustrious disciple of Śrī Īśvara Purī, Lord Caitanyadeva spread the message of love of Godhead as the highest goal throughout the world. Most of the renunciates of Śrī Madhva were with one staff (ekadandi) and were titled 'Tirtha Swami' in addition to their names. However, Śrī Mādhavendra was not of this category being titled Purī Goswami. The inference here is that he would have taken his renounced order from the Impersonalist groups, having that title (Purī Goswami), while his initiation and learning were definitely derived from the Madhavites. In Bhakti

Ratnakara, there is mentioned that Śrī Nityananda Prabhu took shelter of Laksmipati for spiritual guidance. The main renounced devotees of the Madhva lineage were all denoted by this title "Tirtha Swami". Some of the imposter disciplic groups seem to have cast some doubts on the lineage of Śrī Madhva but their suspicions are baseless and due to sheer ignorance. The evidence illustrated in books like Gaura Ganodesa Dipika, Bhakti Ratnakara, Prameya Ratnāvalī and also works of Śrī Gopal Guru Goswami, all are in close agreement and testify to the disciplic lineage of Śrī Madhva. The Śrī Gopal PurvatapaniSruti proves that Lord Brahma was the disciple of Lord Krishna. That Śrī Madhva was the disciple of Śrī Vyāsadeva is a noted historical fact (see life history of Madhva).

Once, it has been said that some discussions were going on with Madhva and other Sankarite scholars at Markanikaya ghat, all of them who were observing vows of fasting. Suddenly from the sky, like a blue cloud, Śrī Vyāsadeva appeared in the presence of all as witness and rejected all Sankara's ideology while accepting the philosophy of Śrī Madhva. Śrīmad Baladeva Prabhu has formulated nine proverbial statements, which have been verified by Śrīman Mahāprabhu in His instructions to His close followers and which are accepted as the supreme principles of Vedanta philosophy. Śrī Madhva states :-

- (i) Lord Vishnu is the Supreme Entity
- (ii) He is the Absolute Knower of all things
- (iii) The material universe is real
- (iv) The living entity is different from Lord Vishnu
- (v) All the living entities are the servants of Lord Hari
- (vi) There are two types of living entities (i) conditioned
(ii) liberated souls
- (vii) Liberation is in attaining to the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu
- (viii) Liberation is possible only after living entities take to the transcendental service of the Supreme Lord

(ix) Direct evidence, inference and knowledge from scriptures are three types of proof.

These nine 'Prameyas' were later propagated by Lord Caitanya as part of the Gaudiya Vaishnava doctrines. They are natural evidence in concord with Vedānta Sūtra. These 'Prameyas' were not concocted by the author of 'Prameya Ratnāvalī' but were taken from Śrī Madhva himself.

The ancient verse beginning with "Śrī Madhva Mate Hari paratamah satyam jagat" means, by the philosophy of Śrī Madhva, Lord Hari is the Supreme Truth, the material universe though apparently real is different and a transformation of His energy. There are innumerable living entities and all are ultimately servants of Lord Hari. They, by their different endeavors and by results of their actions attain to either high or low positions. The living entities, forgetting their eternal service to Lord Krishna by aversion to Him, have become entangled by material nature. This aversion has led them to ignorantly identify themselves as human beings or demigods e.c.t.. By giving up such aversion, and becoming established in one's constitutional position in service to Lord Hari marks the dawn of liberation. When one is situated at the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu because of being naturally engaged in his original identity as eternal servitor of the Lord he becomes liberated. Pure devotion means to be free from all selfish desires related to fruitive activity, independent search for knowledge, etc.. This itself entails liberation. The three types of proof are (i) Revealed scriptural knowledge (ii) Inference (iii) Direct evidence. (That Śrīman Mahāprabhu accepted the philosophy of Śrī Madhva to be consistent with the axioms of the Vedānta, is clear from the writings of Śrī Baladeva Prabhu.)

Nevertheless, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja, in the 9th chapter of Madhya līlā, of Śrī Caitanya Charitamṛta has given an interesting account of the discussion between the Madhavites and Śrīman Mahāprabhu. We can gather from this that the Madhavites strictly believed in the

adherence to the formal varṇa-āśrama system and the surrendering of the fruits of one's honest work to Lord Kṛṣṇa as part of their devotional practice. Therefore this process would enable them in the end to attain the five-fold liberation and attain to the desired spiritual Vaikuṇṭha planets. Śrīman Mahāprabhu, by using the verse from the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam "sravanam kirtanam vishnu smaranam" as evidence, had demonstrated to them that hearing and chanting are the most important practices in respect to the attainment of the pure objective, love of Godhead. He gave this verdict to Śrīmad Raghuvaryatirtha Swami, the scholar of the Madhavites :- "Hearing and chanting which are the part of the nine limbs of devotional service, leads to devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is the fifth and most Supreme goal of human life while the other four are simply cheating tendencies, prema or love of Godhead is free from all such faults. Fruitive work or the surrender of the fruits of such work can never lead to directly love of God. Nonetheless, by that path, the mind becomes gradually purified and can induce one to honor and adore the saintly people, giving rise to faith in the process of pure devotion. This means that faith in the hearing and chanting of the Holy Names etc. is primary and will lead one to the goal directly. To the extent that the gross and subtle impurities are nullified in a person, in that measure can love be instilled in one's heart. In conclusion, love of God is never generated by surrender of one's fruits of work. Love is dependent on the mood of self-surrender and submission of the individual which is only evolved by association of the saintly devotees. Hence the pure devotees reject all ideas of liberation stemming from fruitive work and knowledge, shunning these as unfavorable to pure devotion and if these two are your aspired means and the goal as you have pointed out then it is my belief that you are saying this only to tease me".

After hearing the humble tones of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's speech the leader of Madhavites, lowered his head in shame. Śrīman Mahāprabhu was the "Ācārya"

in pure devotional conclusions and He went on to say, 'the fruitive worker and salvationists are devoid of devotion and it seems to me that your disciplic succession seem to stress their very two processes which is works and knowledge. Nonetheless, I see one exceptional positive quality in your succession, in that you believe in the blissful form of the Deity as the Supreme Lord. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura has written on this aspect.

"Śrīman Mahāprabhu tells the leader of the Madhavites, "Your philosophy is generally in contradiction to pure devotional conclusions but I see one outstanding supporting truth, the eternality of the Supreme Lord and the acceptance of the deity form as non-different from Him". The purport of this statement implied that my grand spiritual master, SriMadhavendra Purī in recognizing this outstanding feature of the acceptance of the blissful Deity form, has for this reason accepted the disciplic line of Madhavites. Śrīla Jiva Goswami has eulogized Śrī Madhva in 'Tattva Sandarbha' by writing :- 'Madhva caranaih' which is plural tense (bahu vachan). Śrīla Baladeva commentary in that same book runs:- The Śrīmad Bhagavat was highly worshipped by Śrī Madhva. Śrī Sankara had no chance to misconstrue the meanings of this book. Still, his disciple named Punyaranya who wrote a commentary based on impersonalism or monistic ideals did cause many devotees (Vaishnavas) to deviate after reading the said commentary, by becoming attracted to it. Śrī Madhva, to dismiss their deviant monistic ideals and to lead the devotees back on the proper path, had written a very concessive commentary in the Bhagavatam counteracting the said deviant propositions. Hence the word "Madhva caranaih" as quoted in this sense, not only signifies great respect for Sri Madhva but also refers him as the proper predecessor Ācārya in the disciplic line. Śrī Madhva was the incarnation of the Wind God Vayu himself in person. He is all knowing and not able to be surpassed. It is said, at one time he defeated a very eminent scholar who was the head of the fourteen Maths

in less than an hour. The scholar later bowed down to his feet as a disciple and became renowned by the name of "Śrī Padmanabha". In Śrīla Jīva Goswami's commentary "Tattva Sandarbha" (26th chapter) for the word "tattva vada gurunam". Śrīla Baladeva has written :-

*sarvam vastu satyam iti vādaśtattva
vādaśtad upadeśṭṛṇam ity arthah*

Meaning :- The words of Ācārya Sankara, which based Brahman as the only Truth while the whole world as false, was refuted by Śrī Madhva and to demonstrate this, he declared all things to be true by his famous axiom: 'sarvam vastu satyam'. For this reason he was called a 'tattva-vada' Guru (follower of Truth). This world, though real, is temporary and subject to destruction. Though subject to change, still, being a manifestation of the superior "cit" (spiritual) energy, it cannot be completely dismissed as void but is a temporary manifestation which is existent. Śrīla Jīva Goswami had drawn many verses from the works of Śrīla Madhva as reference for illustration in his 'Sandarbhas' to present devotional conclusions. These books of Śrī Madhva did contain much evidence from the Śruti and Smṛtis. Some of the works of Śrī Madhva were "Bhagavat-tat-parya", "Bharata-tat-parya", "Brahma Sutra bhasya". For example, in 'Bharatatatparya', verses from Catur Veda Śruti, different portions of Garuda Purāṇa, Mahā-Saṁhita, 'brahmā-tarka' (tantra) were all incalculated. These books too, provided a strong basis for proof of devotion. The original books like 'tantra bhagavat' and 'brahma tarka' which had corresponding statements in the light of pure devotional evidence was in circulation only during those times of Śrī Madhva and has become obsolete in the present times. Śrī Madhva, while touring different places of pilgrimage, had the opportunity to read and commit to memory many of these priceless books and had transcribed the most important verses. Śrīla Vyāsadeva's "Brahma Tarka" is one such book. Even though Śrī Madhva's philosophy was

stolidly based on the principle of pure duality, there is proof that he was favorable to the principle of Inconceivable Oneness and Differences (*acintya bheda-abheda*) which can be validated by his positive writings in certain places. There can be no doubt that at least he accepted this above principle 'acintya bheda abheda' within his mind. Two verses are adapted from *Brahma tarka*:

*viśeṣaya viśiṣṭasyā pybhedastad eva tu
sarvaṁ achintya śakti tvad yuyate paramesvare
tacchaktyaiḥ eva tu jī veṣu cid rūpa prakṛta vapi
bhedaḥbhedaḥ tad-anyatra hyubhayaḥ api darśanāt*

Meaning :- By the inconceivable potency of the Lord, the particular transcendental Supreme object is non-different from its attributes. The potency of the Supreme Lord is the living entity and the material nature is a reflection of the spiritual energy, there are indeed both similarities and differences between the Supreme Lord and the living entity, also between the spiritual potency and material nature, all of which are inconceivable. The foundation and philosophy of the Gaudiya devotees is this principle of Inconceivable Oneness and Difference ("*acintya bheda-abheda*"). The point that Śrī Madhva had accepted this in the start reinforces his unbroken connection with the Gaudiya devotees. From the texts of Śrī Madhva, Śrī Jiva Goswami has, collected much back up evidence for Gaudiya Vaishnavism, far more in comparison to that of any of other Vaishnava leaders. Though SriMadhva did receive the renounced order (*sannyāsa*) from the Sankarites at the age of twelve years, he never did support the monistic ideals of Sankara. He received initiation as 'Purna Prajna', from Acyuta Preksha, his spiritual master, who later was converted by becoming his own very disciple!

In Badarikāśrama, he met Vyāsadeva face to face, and after receiving his sublime instructions, began to engage in the service and worship of 18 Salagramas at his behest.

One day, while Śrī Madhva was bathing in the ocean, he managed to discover in a huge block of sandalwood (candana), from which a beautiful Deity of the young boy Śrī Krishna emerged. Later, He began to worship this Deity along with the 18 Salagramas, side by side in Udipi. Śrī Madhva was the disciple of Śrī Vyāsadeva, similarly Śrī Vyāsadeva was the disciple of Nārada Rṣi (evidence from Bhāgavatam 1/4) and Nārada Rṣi was the disciple of Lord Brahmā (Bhag 2/7/51). Further, in Brahma Samhita, Gopal Tapani Smṛti and Śrīmad Bhagavatam, Lord Brahma is illustrated to be the disciple of Śrī Krishna : As Śrī Krishna tells Uddhava S.B.(11/11/3):-

*kāleṇa naṣṭa pralaye vaṇīyam vedasamijñitā
mayādaḥ brahmāṇe proktaḥ dharma yasyām madatmākaḥ*

Meaning:- In the Vedas, My nature and qualities are described. When this by the influence of time, becomes lost as in the periodic annihilation of the world, I, again at the beginning of creation, give this knowledge to Lord Brahmā. The Manduka Smṛti (1/1/1) has described :-

*brahmā devānām prathamam sarva bhūva
viśvasya karta bhuvanasya goptā
sa brahmā vidyām sarva vidyā pratiṣṭhām
arthavāya jyeṣṭha putrāya prāha*

Meaning :- Lord Brahmā is the maintainer and creator of the material universe of living and non-living things and chief of all demigods. He was born from the lotus navel of Śrī Nārāyaṇa, and is the foremost in all scriptural knowledge which he delivered in essence to his eldest son :- Atharva:- Rig Veda Samhita gives this verse :-

*om tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam sadā
paśyanti surayoḥ divīva cakṣuratātām*

Meaning :- The abode of Lord Vishnu is effulgent like the sun and this transcendental abode of the Lord is perceived by the devotees eternally (Vaishnavas). The devotees of the Supreme Lord are perfect recipients of this knowledge of brahma vidyā.

In the Śrutis many verses are there which states that the Supreme Lord was originally present as the cause of all causes and the One Non-dual Absolute Truth. From Maṇḍuka Śruti (1/2/13)

*tasmai sa vidan anupasannāya samyak
praśānta cittāya śaman vitāya
yena kṣaram puruṣaṁ veda satyaṁ
pravāca taṁ tattvato brahmavidyāṁ*

Meaning :- The one who understands Śrī Krishna is Guru. With obedience to the proper rules from scriptures, the inquisitive disciple who approaches him with a serene mind, completely controlled and freed from attachment to material objects is awarded the knowledge called brahma vidya, by which the Supreme Lord can be known in truth.

From the above statements of Śruti we can understand that this Brahma disciplic chain is from ancient times. Lord Brahma himself has obtained his transcendental instructions from Lord Krishna and right down to this present period, the knowledge has descended through the disciplic line intact.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in reply as to the question of why this disciplic succession had come about, in Jaiva Dharma comments:- In this world many have become deviant by the force of monistic ideals. [Impersonalism]. Without a proper disciplic chain, no possibility of association or guidance from the right sources can be obtained. It is for this reason, Padma Purāṇa has emphatically declared that the mantra obtained without a disciplic chain bears no fruit. Of the four accepted disciplic chains, the Brahmā Sampradāya is most ancient, this disciplic lineage is still being in continuance from long ago. Śrīmad Kavikarnapura has compiled from the Gaura Ganodesa Dipika the formula of the exact succession of the Brahma disciplic lineage of spiritual masters:- Lord Brahma was the disciple of Lord Nārāyaṇa and his disciple

was Śrī Nārada. From Śrī Nārada Rṣi to Śrī Vyāsadeva. It has been mentioned that the son of Vyāsadeva was Śukadeva Goswami who, though being a self-realized soul from birth, began to be attracted to learning the Śrīmad Bhagavatam after hearing a few selected verses from the lips of his father. In due course, he studied the Śrīmad Bhagavatam from his father and therefore is considered as a disciple of Śrīla Vyāsadeva. The most famous Mādhavācārya also took his initiation from Śrī Vyāsadeva and his disciplic lineage has descended in the following order : Śrī Padmanabha - Śrī Nara Hari - Śrī Mādhava Vipra - Śrī Akshobhya - Jaya Tirtha - Śrī Jñāna Sindhu - Śrī Dayaniddhi - Śrī Rajendra - Śrī Jaya Dharma - Śrī Puruṣottama - Śrī Brahmanya - Śrī Vyāsātirtha {Śrī Laksmipati - Śrī Mādhavendra Purī. Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī established pure devotional ideals and his disciple was Śrī Īśvara Purī. Lord Gaurasundara, taking Śrīla Īśvara Purī as his spiritual master, has inundated all the worlds with the wealth of love of Godhead. The disciple of Śrīmad Vakresvara Paṇḍita, Śrīmad Gopal Guru Gosvami, has accepted this succession of spiritual masters in this manner. Also the disciple of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Narahari Ṭhākura, has in his book Bhakti Ratnakara, verified this disciplic succession. Our prominent Ācāryas, the worshipable Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura have shown themselves to be cent-per-cent for the disciplic line described by Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. In this regard, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comments :-

"The Brahma disciplic line is the path recognized by all the followers of Lord Caitanya. This information has been obtained in accordance with the evidence of the book 'Gaura Gaṇoddesa Dipika' of Śrī Kavikarnapura written in proper sequence and has been verified by Śrīla Vidyābhūṣaṇa. One who does not accept this succession is definitely the foremost enemy of the Gaudiya Vaishnavites". Further in the book "Śrīman Mahāprabhu

Sikṣa", Śrīla Bhaktivinod Thākura has written: - The philosophy of Śrī Nimbarka which is Oneness and Difference was not complete in itself as being most ideal, but by the teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu however, this knowledge has become complete. Lord Gaurasundara accepted the lineage of Śrī Madhva because of their firm acceptance of the Deīty form of the Lord which is deemed completely existent, cognizant and blissful and non-different from the Supreme Lord. From this fact, the instantaneous Oneness and Difference principle is validated for it is the root of this contention. Though the principle of pure devotion is always the same, the non-conformity in detail manifested itself in the arise of these four different disciplic successions. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has synthesized all these different philosophies in the most proper context by taking from Śrī Maḍhva his concept of the eternal Deity form, the concept of different energies of the Lord from Śrī Rāmānuja, from Vishnu Svami, his concept of the non-duality and worship of the paraphernalia of the Lord and also Śrī Nimbarka's philosophy of Oneness and Difference was inculcated, all in turn becoming most relevant, with the original underlying principle of Instantaneous, Inconceivable Oneness and Difference. Very soon, only one authorized disciplic chain will remain by the name "Śrī Brahmā-Sampradāya". All the others will merge under this banner. The Śrī - Brahma - Madhva - Gaudiya lineage of pure spiritual masters or guru paramparā is defined in this fashion. As before Lord Krishna - Brahma - Narada - Vyāsa - Madhva down the line to Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.

Bhāgavat GuruParamparā

Lord Krishna → Lord Brahmā → Nārada Muni
 → Śrī Vyāsa → Śrī Padmanabha → Narahari
 → Śrī Mādhava Vipra → Śrī Akshobhya → Jaya Tirtha
 → Śrī Jñānasindhu → Śrī Dayāniddhi → Vidyānidhi
 → Śrī Rajendra → Śrī Jaya Dharma → Śrī Puruṣottama
 → Śrī Brahmanyatirtha → Śrī Vyāsātirtha
 → Śrī Laksmipati → Śrī Mādhavendra Purī

→ Śrī Īśvara Purī → Lord Chaitanya → Śrī Rūpa,
 → Śrī Sanātana (Six Goswamis)
 → Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Goswami
 → Śrīla Narottama Dās Ṭhākura
 → Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
 → Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa
 → Śrīla Jagannātha Dās Bābāji
 → Śrīla Bhaktivinoda — Śrīla Gaura Kishore
 Ṭhākura (Sikṣa Guru) Das Babāji (Dikṣa Guru)
 → Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda

In this context, [many people accepting Śrīman Mahāprabhu's position as the initiator of this Gaudiya disciplic line however fail to accept that His succession was connected with Śrī Madhva] Our opinion here is that simply accepting Śrīman Mahāprabhu does not mean the individual's sense of judgment and decorum has exceeded that of the Supreme Lord Gaurāṅga. The inauguration of any disciplic line is completely His potency and not without His mercy. He is Lord Krishna Himself, the origin of all expansions and the original Guru. The Supreme Lord has accepted the Brahma disciplic succession, in His exhibition of the pastimes of Lord Gaurāṅga as a pure devotee to set the proper code of action for all the masses. He, by means of implicit obedience to the spiritual master in that succession, has also exhibited the model behavior of proper service to the spiritual master. Lord Krishna Himself, in His variegated pastimes showed remarkable steadfastness in service to Sandipani Muni.

All this did not make Him less the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīman Mahāprabhu in accepting this lineage of Śrī Madhva has illuminated to us the proper disciplic succession from Brahma. Though [some points of Śrī Madhva's teachings as the overly reliance on work and knowledge as the ends and means or regarding that of Maha Lakṣmi and the Vraja gopīs may not be in proper conformity with the Gaudiyas] Nevertheless, we have to honor the instructions and example of Śrīman

Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Lord.

The youngest son of an intimate disciple of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, named Śrī Sivananda Sena was Paramananda Das who used to be affectionately called Purī Das by the Lord. For at an infant stage, he once sucked the toe of the Lord. This same Purī Das, at an age of only seven years, quoted this Sanskrit verse in an erudite manner :

*śravasoh kuvalayaḥ akṣṇor añjanamuraso
mahendra maṇidāma etc..*

Meaning :- Glory to Śrī Hari who possesses lotus earrings and adored with collyrium with the Mahendra diamond on His chest and beloved of the damsels of Vrindavana.

This extraordinary composition of the young boy left Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His associates with joy filled wonder at such exhibition of scholarship. He later became famous as Kavikarnapur and became famous among the associates of the Lord as prolific poet and scholar. Some of his works include "Ananda Vrindavana Campu", "Gaura Ganoddesa Dipika", etc., of which from the latter book, the disciplic succession has been stated as it is. The disciplic succession from Śrī Gauri Das Pandit down to Śrī Hrdaya Caitanya then onto Śrī Syamananda, to Śrī Rāṣikananda to Śrī Nityananda and then from Śrī Rādhā-Damodar finally to Śrīmad Baladeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa is mentioned. Śrīla Baladeva, in his compilation of "Govinda Bhasya", have managed to maintain the dignity of followers of Lord Caitanya by preserving the disciplic succession intact. This is explained with great adoration in the beginning of his commentary on the Vedānta, the Gaudiya Bhasya. Those who neglect the words of great souls as Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa, Śrī Kavikarnapur and Śrī Gopal Guru in not accepting the Madhva lineage as part of the Lord Caitanya's Brahma disciplic succession, are great offenders to the lotus feet of these great souls. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja Goswami has written "Śrī

Madhavendra Purī was the original seed of the tree of love of Godhead and he, in taking the shelter of Śrī Laksmipati, has, by necessity, accepted the shelter of Śrī Madhva succession. Śrī Īśvara Purī is the devoted disciple of Śrī Madhavendra Purī also was all-glorious". There is no other destination for us than this acceptance of the Madhva lineage. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has informed us in his verse, beginning with 'amnaya praha tattvam harimiha paramam sarva saktim rasabdhim' regarding the secrets of the ten most important truths, one amongst them being the acceptance of the Madhva disciplic succession. "This disciplic succession is gleaned from evidence through the Vedas. The Vedas and corresponding scriptures like Śrīmad Bhagavatam and Puranic scriptures are direct evidences. From these proofs we can understand that Lord Hari is the Supreme Truth, He is replete with all energies and the ocean of all nectarean mellows. The two types of living entities are His parts and parcels like the liberated and conditional souls. The conditioned soul is engrossed in matter while the liberated soul is free from matter. The spiritual and material worlds are related on this manner by the inconceivable Oneness and Difference principle of Lord Hari. Devotion as the only means and love of Godhead is the only accomplishment. In conclusion, thereby, the name of our genuine succession is the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya disciplic succession.

PREACHING AND SELF-PRACTICE

During His tour of South India Śrīman Mahāprabhu had converted many local people of that part of that country into Vaishnavism by distributing love of Godhead, purifying such places with the resounding chant of the Holy Name of God. He, finally in His wanderings come to the place called Kurma and as a matter of due course took the audience of the presiding Deity, Lord Kurma Deva. Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his commentary in regard to this place: The place Śrī Kurmam is 8 miles east V.N.R line, Ganjam Jela, Cika Kola Road Station. This is the most famous pilgrimage spot in the area where this Deity of Kurma is present. During the 11th century, Śrī Ramana Ācārya being flung or transported out from Purī Dhām by Lord Jagannātha landed in this very place. Initially believing the presiding Deity to be Lord Śiva he began to practice several vows like fasting, in indignation but later in his meditations come to realize this Deity was none other than the of Lord Viṣṇu and began to serve this Deity in enthusiasm. A pious Brahman named 'Kurma' living at that place had invited Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and with other members of his family attended to Him with the most loving service and care. At the time of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's departure this good soul was overcome by the pangs of loving separation which made him implore Śrīman Mahāprabhu to take him along on His journey. Śrīman Mahāprabhu in being satisfied with the nature of his kind service and adoration remarked gravely: -

prabhu kahe -

eche bāta kabu na kahibā

grhe rahi kṛṣṇa nāma niranta loibā

yāre dekha tāre kara kṛṣṇa upadeśa

āmāra ājñāya guru hoiyā tāra ei deśa

kabu nā bāddhibe tomāya viṣaya taraṅga

punar api ei tṛhāṇi pābe mora saṅga

Śrīman Mahāprabhu who had performed the pastime of taking alms from the Brahmin's house gravely told this Brahmin to take the Holy Names constantly and side by side to preach this Name to others. In this way if he will engage in the welfare activities for others, the material energy will not be able to influence him in any way and he would be able to associate with the Lord in the near future.

Likewise Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself traveling from the holy place of Nilacala right up to Setu Bandhu, preached the Holy Names in every village along the way making all dance to the sound of the Holy Names in spiritual ecstasy. Śrīman Mahāprabhu, after staying one night in the house of the Brahmin, in the following morning after His daily purificatory activities took his leave, with His good host following Him for some distance. After bading farewell to the Lord and returning to his house, the Brahmin noticed nearby another Brahmin named Vasudeva who has been afflicted with an abominable disease, leprosy in its latent stage. He was beating his breast and rolling on the ground with grief in not having had the audience with the Lord which he had eagerly anticipated. Lord Gaura Sundara had already gone some distance ahead, yet being the innermost dweller in the hearts of all beings, returned to that very place to bestow His mercy upon this Brahmin. Not only was the Brahmin Vasudeva awarded the sight of His transcendental form, he was also embraced with great affection by Lord Gauranga. Miraculously, all the symptoms of this despicable disease disappeared from the body of the Brahmin and he regained his beautiful appearance on contact with the spiritual body of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. The wonder-struck Brahmin Vasudeva, with tears in his eyes, then began to quote verses from the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10/81/16 as was spoken by the devotee Sudama:-

kṛāham daridram pāpiyān kva kṛṣṇaḥ śrī-niketaṇaḥ

brahma bandhuriti smāhaṁ bāhubhyāṁ parirambhitaḥ

Meaning :- Sudama said:- "I am nothing but the most sinful and lowly Brahmin and how could I possibly compare in any way to the Lord of all opulence, Śrī Hari. Nevertheless, He with His two arms has embraced this most lowly person".

Then he, Vasudeva, crying in sobbing tones again spoke: "Only the original Lord, the Savior of the fallen and lowly can perform this most magnanimous deed. I have been afflicted with this disgusting disease and the odor of my affected limbs would even make the most lowly person flee from me. Still, the Independent Controller whose nature is to be distressed at witnessing the misery of others, has mercifully embraced me in my wretched condition. Oh Lord Hari! I deem my former untouchable state more superior position for now the knowledge of my high birth could give vent to false pride which will make me forget the shade of Your lotus feet". Hearing these gentle words, Śrīman Mahāprabhu consoled him, saying:- (M 7/147-148)

*kabu tomāra nā habe abhimāna
nirantara kaha tumi kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa nāma*

"Chant the Holy Names constantly and deliver the Holy Names to others and in this way no pride will affect you. Lord Śrī Krishna will definitely accept you if you follow these instructions. After comforting him in this way, Śrīman Mahāprabhu disappeared, leaving the two Brahmins to embrace and weep in the mood of separation. In Caitanya Caritāmṛta this incident is referred as the deliverance of Vasudeva; here we have seen specifically, how Śrīman Mahāprabhu had given instructions to the Brahmins to chant the Holy Names constantly, and preach it with showing proper example to others.

The most worshippingable Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda comments:- One who surrenders to Śrīman Mahāprabhu and decides to serve Him, Lord Gaura Sundara surely

accepts their devotional service. But there are certain rules to be strictly observed. While in the household life, one should practice chanting, giving up the false pride of being a great devotee. Further, he should, in the proper mood, remain intent on the preaching the Holy Names of Krishna, for the welfare of others. He should never think that his devotional service would be impaired by the growth of pride in making disciples and preaching, but continue preaching humbly and faithfully. Consequently, he would be benedicted in the sense that false prestige and material desire would never overcome him. Many stalwart devotees like Śrī Narottama Dās Ṭhākura, Rāmanujācārya, etc. have been criticized by ignorant people for accepting many disciples who view this as a sign of material desire and not conducive for proper devotion. This category of foolish people thus incur offense at the lotus feet of the pure devotees of the Lord. These offenders should bear this specific instructions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in mind and try to progress by following in his footsteps namely, by preaching the Holy Names and giving up all sense of false humility. This parting instructions of the Lord was specifically meant for their ears. Lord Caitanya, by His wide preaching, did reinstate the proper consciousness of the fallen souls. They in turn too carried on this preaching work to revive other conditioned souls and in this way, Śrīman Mahāprabhu gradually expanded the 'Acyuta' dynasty in the pursuance of pure devotion.

On the other hand, there are many who, not understanding the purpose of the Lord's instructions to become guru and deliver the land, instead, become inflated with arrogance and false pride in an artificial limelight. These misguided people would have to surely glide downwards into the hellish regions. One has to take the role of the servant of the servant of the devotees, guru and Supreme Lord and in complete submission to bear their instructions upon one's head. One practicing model conduct appropriate to these instructions will mean no

question of demoniac tendencies being developed in any one. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has placed the actual identity of every living entity as not belonging to any particular class or creed, but as the servant of the servant of the husband of the gopīs (Lord Krishna). When this concrete realization eventually awakens with the solid desire to execute welfare activity for others, then there is no anxiety of falling down.

*āmi to' vaiṣṇava ei buddhi hoile amāni nā haba āmi
pratiṣṭhāśa āsi hṛdaya duṣibe hoibe nīrayagāmi*

One should never have the false prestige that he is a great devotee but know this as the doorway to hell. Even after accepting disciples, one should be careful to be free from pride. Offenses are incurred in not obeying the instructions of the great souls. Simply giving lip service to such instructions but internally maintaining pride in one's heart would ultimately mean sure defeat by the power of illusory energy. Nobody can cheat the omniscient Lord present in the heart of all others! The desire of Lord Gaura Hari is that the task of preaching should go side by side with one's personal character and example.

*pratyaḥ kara tina lakṣa nāma saṅkīrtana
sabāra āge kara nāsera mahimā kathan
āpane achare keha, nā kare pracāra
pracāra karena keha nā karen ācāra
ācāra-pracāra-nāmera karaha dui kārya*

(Cc Adi 4/101-103)

"Here, Śrīla Sanātana Goswami addresses Nama Ācārya Śrīla Haridās Ṭhākura, saying that daily you have to chant three lakhs of the Holy Names. Some people have good character but do not preach while other preachers have no personal example of their own. One has to execute both these activities in a proper measure to do the work of an 'Ācārya':

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:- Śrīla Haridās Ṭhākura was the guru of the whole world. Chanting the Holy

Names in a manner after having properly been initiated was his constant daily example to others and by deliberately chanting the Holy Names in a loud manner was able to deliver all the living beings by initiating them into the sound of the Holy Names. Therefore his model behavior coupled with the propagation of the Name was the best example of one who conducts both these activities. Śrīman Mahāprabhu's famous declaration: (C.C. Adi 3/20-21)

*āpani ācari' bhakti śikhānu sabāre
āpane nā kaile dharma śikhāna na jāya*

"In order to be affective in preaching the divine message, one should first practice it himself".

In Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā Lord Krishna tells Arjuna:-

*yad yad acarati śreṣṭhas tad tad evataro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokastad anuvartate*

"Whatever is established by the learned people is accepted by the common people".

This word 'śreṣṭhas' denotes the 'Ācārya' or one who personally guide people by his behavior. Their conduct will usually be followed by the masses. In the Mahābharata, Yuddhisthira Mahārāja, in reply to Lord Dharma's question as to what is the best possible path quotes :-mahājana yena gataḥ sa panthaḥ. The best recourse is to implicitly follow the path chalked out by the great souls. The four common faults are not present in these great souls. These faults are namely illusion which is mistaking something which is not true as real, carelessness or instability of mind, imperfection of the senses, as in the seeing of mirages and the usual cheating tendency which is to insist you know something when you do not. In this regard, the great souls who are well versed in the highest truths and have knowledge of the scriptures are free from these four faults. They are by nature equipped with good conduct and completely

devoid of enviousness, enmity, anger and hypocrisy. The profound truthful words of such teachers are regarded as 'evidence'. On the other hand, if a person is learned in different scriptures and erudite in speech, still if his character is devious then his instruction to others are of little use. In short, preaching the holy messages without personal example and practice is of little gain. King Parikṣit, in disciplining the Personification of Kali, submitted to his earnest plea and granted him five places for his residence, irreligion to flourish. These are namely gambling, liquor and all other stimulants, illicit sexual intercourse, violence (brutal killing of defenseless creatures) and gold (money used in the service of the Lord properly does not fall into this category). The practice of gambling breeds dishonesty, drinking of intoxicants and taking of stimulants lead to loss of austerities. Mingling with women leads to loss of cleanliness. Violence to living creatures leads to a temperament devoid of compassion all together. Thus all forms of irreligiousness spring up from these vices. In fact, the greed or illegal accumulation of money or gold is the cause of other four vices though by itself is in the fifth position. Hence those desiring their highest welfare should not indulge in any of these sinful activities at all, especially the religious minded person. A King and spiritual leader or 'guru' should shun all such activities from a distance. Such indulgence in irreligion will only deteriorate the character of the individual and all his so called preaching will be of no avail Śrīman Mahāprabhu to Sanātana Goswami says:-

asat-saṅga-tyāga—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
'stri-saṅgi'—eka asādhū, 'kṛṣṇa abhakta' āra.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comments: in a direct way Vaishnava conduct is the association of the pure devotees and indirectly under this principle, there is the rejection of bad association. Bad association is of two types : association with women and their playmates and also with the non devotees of Śrī Krishna. The sincere devotees

should vigilantly endeavor to avoid such bad association.

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: the gist of proper Vaishnava conduct is the rejection of the non devotees. They are listed as those who consort which women against scriptural injunctions and people averse to Lord Krishna. Those who normally consort with women are twofold, firstly one who liases with his wedded wife consistent with the householder life 'varnashrama system', and secondly one who deceitfully indulges in illicit connection causing a disruption in the established law and the main reason for future hellish births. One who indulges and relishes sinful activities can hardly be termed as a 'vaishnava'. Piousness, wealth, sense-satisfaction are restricted by this type of bad conduct. The ideal fourth objective of human life which is liberation is barred too, by illegal association with women and in another sense more implicating and derogatory because it stifles the natural urges for pure devotion to Śrī Krishna. The fruitive worker tries to enjoy the material world for personal sense-gratification while the Impersonalist renounces the material world for his own salvation. In this sense, both are guilty of independent and selfish motives within the context of hypocrisy. We cannot term such people as servant as of Lord Krishna i.e. they are non-devotees. As Lord Kapila informs His mother Devahuti (3/31/33)

*teṣv asānteṣu mūdhesu khanditātmasv asādhusu
saṅgamī nā kuryācchocyēṣu yoṣit-kriḍā-mṛgeṣu ca
na tathāsyā bhaven moho bandhascānya-prasaṅgataḥ
yoṣit-saṅgād yathā puniso yatha tat-saṅgi-saṅgataḥ*

"Truthfulness, internal and external cleanliness, generosity, intelligence, modesty, fame, perseverance, control of the mind and sense dwindle in the association of women. One should never associate with those in the bodily concept of life or who is a toy in the hands of women. Such unholy association should be shunned from a distance. There is no greater misery than association with those who consort with women or their playmates".

Conclusively however intelligent, erudite or learned speaker one may be, if he exhibits the following bad characteristics or bad conduct he will never be able to preach the name, fames pastimes of Lord Krishna. As Śrīla Narottama Dās Ṭhākura warns us in the "Prema Bhakti Chandrika:-

*karma kānda jñāna kānda, kevala viṣera bhāṇḍa
amṛta baliyā yerā khāya*

"Meaning: speculative knowledge and fruitive activity is dangerous as poison for they lead us away from the pure goal. Further, Śrīla Narottama continues to warns us against mystic yogis like those who practice meditation and other futile practices, dry logicians worshipers of the Demigods who are all to be avoid as non-devotees".

The book of our predecessor Gurus contain many simplified extracts which is the essence of Vaishnava conclusions. In taking the shelter of the bona fide Guru and studying all these devotional literatures constantly with following the proper conduct, will help one in contributing to the task of preaching. Books like 'Prathana', 'Prema chandrika' by Narottama Dās Ṭhākura, 'Saraṇagati', 'Kalyana Kalpataru', 'Gītā valī' and 'Gītā mala' by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura contains the essence of all the scriptures. The songs 'Saraṇagati' runs as follows:-

*śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya prabhu jīve doya kari
sva paṛśada sviya dhāma saha avatāri*

"The purport of this song is that without surrender nobody raise himself to the highest stage, nor will he able to preach the Holy Names, form and pastimes of Śrī Krishna effectively".

Lord Krishna had descended to enact His wonderful pastimes tinged with absolute sweetness in the association of His confidential associates in the material world. In Kali Yuga immediately after that, the Supreme Lord Gaura Hari appeared as the most magnificent incarnation to

distribute the sweet mellows of devotion after relishing it Himself. It is in order to help people to attain this highest stage that Śrīman Mahāprabhu had instructed all of us to take up exclusive self-surrender to the Supreme Lord. There are six forms of self-surrender. In Vaishnava Tantra this is mentioned;-

*ānukulyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikulyasya varjanam
rakṣiṣyati iti viśvaso goptṛtve varaṇam tathā
ātma-nikṣepa kārpaṇya śaḍ-viddhā śaraṇāgatih*

“Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura writes in his commentary the following symptoms of surrender are as follows :

To resolve to accept that which is favorable for devotional service (I definitely have to accept it)

To strictly reject all that is unnecessary for proper execution of devotion (I definitely have to renounce this).

Firm faith that only Lord Krishna can protect me (not any form of monistic theories can help me overcome death).

None other than Lord Krishna is my maintainer and supplier (not taking help from demigods or others).

I am not independent but solely dependent on the will of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna.

The feelings of meekness and humility by devotees in conjunction with humility and self-surrender.

In the long run, Lord Krishna is very affectionate to His surrendered servants and ready to bestow them all desirable ends up to the spontaneous devotion of the residents of Vraja.

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda has sung, prāṇa āche tāñhara sehetu pracāra : -“Only one who has life can preach”.

Conclusively, in taking to the above injunctions of self-surrender to the Lord as the first and foremost part of self-conduct only, can one successfully preach the

devotional conclusions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Otherwise, like a dead body, one will neither benefit one's self nor anyone else by his preaching. For our higher spiritual goals, the common striving for the lesser pursuits of profit, distinction and fame is not at all conducive. In Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda's words:

*śrī-dayita dāsa kīrtanete āśa
kara ucchaḥsvare harināma rava*

"Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda was always aspiring to hear the loud chanting of the Holy Names which was the life and soul of the surrendered devotees. Those without life cannot take neither the chanting of the Holy Names, nor preach effectively".

At the time of spiritual initiation, the devotee should surrender wholeheartedly to the lotus feet of the spiritual master if he wishes to receive the mercy of the Supreme Lord. In thinking the spiritual master as a mere mortal, one will not be able to preach. Only by being the proper RECIPIENT of the guru's mercy, with the maintenance of personal conduct and character will we be able to be surcharged with proper strength and intelligence and be able to preach effectively.

RAGANUGA BHAKTI

The only way to attain the Supreme Lord is by the process of devotional service. This has been directly implied with verses from the Bhagavad Gītā as “bhaktyā mām abhijānāti” and “bhaktyā aham ekaya grahyam”. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvami, confidential associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, has defined regulated practice (sadhana) spontaneous devotion (bhāva) and love of Godhead (prema) in this step by step order in his book “Bhakti-Rasāmṛta Sindhu”. The highest perfection of the human body is to attain love of Godhead. Sadhana bhakti or regulative practice is defined by Śrīla Rūpa Goswami:-

*kṛti sādhyā bhavet sādhyā bhāva sā sādhana bhidhā
nitya siddhyasya bhāvasya prākāṭyam hṛdi sādhyatā*

Śrīla Saccinandana Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes :-

When devotion is effected or accomplished through the medium of the sense in order to progress to ‘bhāva’ (spontaneity), this is called regulated devotional practice. The eternally perfected mood of the living entity is pure devotion. To bring it about in the heart of the conditioned living entity is the accomplishment. The purport is that in the infinitesimal living entity, there is a portion of the Supreme bliss of Lord Śrī Krishna, who is compared to the effulgent sun emitting all these tiny sparks. This inherent bliss had been lost by the bondage of the spirit soul. To cause this original eternal state to manifest is possible. This is the proper objective for the bonded soul and when this is achieved by means of discipline of the senses in devotional practice to the Lord, that process is called ‘sadhana bhakti’ or regulated devotional service in practice. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja states in the teachings to Sanātana Goswami by Śrīman Mahāprabhu. (CC M 22/106)

*śravaṇādi-kriyā—tāra ‘svarūpa’- lakṣaṇa
‘taṭhastha’-lakṣaṇe upajāya prema-dhana*

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura writes :- The primary symptom of devotion is to cultivate hearing, chanting and remembering with the mood of attachment to Śrī Krishna : To give up all the unfavorable desires like fruitive work and speculative knowledge and detachment is the secondary symptom. But this detachment with the practice of the above processes of hearing and chanting, can lead gradually to love of Godhead. In actual fact, love of God is an eternally established function and it cannot be brought about by any set formal practice. But by the processes of the practice of the devotional limbs, beginning with chanting, it can possibly manifest in the purified mind. Thus this pure hearing and chanting etc. is fundamentally regulated devotional practice. Devotional practice is two-fold : regulated devotional practice and spontaneous devotion. For persons whose spontaneous devotional moods have not been developed, they have to abide by scriptural injunctions as in the practice of formal regulated devotion. The important sixty-four limbs of devotional practice are defined in the books of Śrī Rūpa Goswami : "Bhakti-Rasāmṛta-Sindhu", and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja, "Caitanya Caritāmṛta". Five have been singled out as most important namely : Association of saintly persons, chanting the Holy Names, hearing the holy Bhāgavata, residing in Māthurā and worshipping the Deity form of the Lord. Anyone of these all five, even if just slightly practiced, can lead to love of Godhead.

When the state of steadiness is reached (niṣṭha), this is the point where love of God may be accomplished and not otherwise (aviksepena satatam). Meaning : Fixed certainty of one's position without any wavering of the mind at any time is the state of steadiness (niṣṭhā). In regard to spontaneous devotion, it has been stated that which has been exhibited by the residents of Vraja is exceptional and has no parallel. The word 'raga' can mean internal attachment. These high caliber devotees do not maintain even an iota of the desire to satisfy their own

senses but constantly strive to fulfill the transcendental senses of the Supreme Lord. To follow in the footsteps of the residents of Vraja sincerely with the proper endeavor in devotion is *rāgānugā-bhakti* or spontaneous devotion. Śrīla Rūpa Goswami has written:

*iṣṭe svārasikhi ragah paramādhiṣṭatā bhavet
tan mayi ya bhavet bhaktiḥ mātṛa ragātmikāḍita*

The intense hankering for one's beloved object is termed as 'rag' and when the beloved objective is Lord Krishna and His devotional service, then this is spontaneous devotion (*rāgātmikā-bhakti*). The spontaneous absorption in one's dearest object is also '*rāgāmāyī*' devotion, which may involve the performance of such loving services as stringing a garland etc. for the Lord in the spontaneous moods of devotion. The main distinct characteristic of such devotion is that deep hankering or greed to attain it exists, while the secondary symptom is absorption in that form of devotion. Ideally, the practice of such devotion is to follow implicitly the practices chalked out by such great devotees of Vraja Dhama.

In other words, to nurse a greed or unquenchable hankering for experiencing the moods of the various mellows like servitorship, friendship, parental affection and conjugal love which are experienced by the residents of Vraja is spontaneous devotion. These loving moods have been described in the Holy scriptures like Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and Padma Purāṇa, etc. This type of thirst does not rise merely on the basis of scriptural injunctions or logical analysis, nor can it be attained by being proficient in the scriptures. Again, the prime qualification for entrance into spontaneous devotion is the intense greed to obtain such transcendental sentiments of the perfected residents of Vraja which is possible only with the strength of the mercy of the spiritual master and the devotees. Such purified aspirants, externally in their normal practices and internally within their perfected

bodies, engage in these high spontaneous practices.

In Hari bhakti Vilas, Śrīla Rūpa Goswami has written to validate this point (sādhana bhakti lahari), confirming that those aspirants greedy for this spontaneous devotion will, in the mood of the residents of Vraja, serve Śrī Krishna both in the 'sadhaka-rūpa' with their normal practices by their external physical bodies and with their original spiritual forms which are eternal and perfected (siddha-rūpa). He has also written how one should always reside solitarily in the holy dhama (Vraja) with great attachment for repeatedly hearing the relishable topics regarding Śrī Krishna and His pure devotees. If one is physically unable to live in Vraja, then at least, by meditations with the mind, he should do so.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Goswami writes (C.C M 22/159)

nijābhīṣṭa kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha pācheta' lāgiyā
nirantara sevā kare antarmanā hañā

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura has commented on this verse :- The residents of Vraja are the dearest servitors of Lord Krishna. Those having the intense greed for relishing the blissful divine mellows which these devotees experience, should constantly engage in service to Lord Krishna in all respects (both externally and internally). In spontaneous devotional practice, four moods are significant which are : servitorship, friendship, parental love and conjugal love while the other called neutral mellows (śānta rasa) is not present among these. (C.C M 2/156). Śrīla Rūpa Goswami offers his obeisances to such high-level devotees : "I pay my obeisances again and again to those who meditate on Lord Śrī Hari and relate with Him as a friend, son, brother, husband and well-wisher in these myriad ways.

One who, at every moment in obedience to Śrī Guru without any tinge of hypocrisy practices his own natural spontaneous moods of devotional practice will result in his obtaining love (prema) of Śrī Krishna. The seed of pure

love is this mood of natural loving affinity which attracts the Supreme Lord Himself. These can take either the name of 'rati' or 'bhāva'.

We can understand from the writings of the great souls, to accomplish the natural loving affinity for the lotus feet of Śrī Krishna is the goal of the living entity. This has been exhibited by the purified denizens of Vraja and the confidential associates of Śrī Krishna in the manner of spontaneous devotional service. This stage will warrant entrance to the stage of pure devotion to the Lord. Still, one should understand that just by formal practice these moods of the Vrajabāsīs are scarcely obtained, we have necessarily attempt to come to the stage of spontaneity of devotion. Nevertheless, this deep affinity for Lord Krishna cannot be obtained by artificially imitating or otherwise. Therefore, one under the direct shelter of the spiritual master and devotees and equipped with the verified evidence from scriptures, should take to the practice of chanting the Holy Names with determination. With the desire for such spontaneous loving moods, one should fervently appeal and pray whole-heartedly to the Holy Names while the most compassionate Personified Holy Names, hearing our prayer, will mercifully give entrance to such devotions in seeing our sincere endeavors. Without this shelter of the Holy Names, one in whimsically diving to such high practices can never produce any auspicious result, and will instead lead only to the degradation of one's self. In this present times, many fraudulent persons, making light of these grave words of the great souls, are making a fad of immature play-acting and exhibition of these high moods of the eternally perfected souls, with their degraded material consciousness. These unauthorized sects (sahajiyas) practice the transcendental recollection of the pastimes of the Divine Couple during the eight periods of the day (aṣṭa-kaliya-līlā smaran) and in gross imitation use terms like ('siddha deha'), perfected body, "Siddha Pranali", and cheaply formulate their distorted

views on such high topics, in other words in complete deviance to pure devotion altogether. [Who can give realization of one's identity? Who can be qualified to receive such instruction? What is the real symptom of greed for spontaneous devotion?] In opposition of the deviant conclusions of these imitative groups, it is at present of utmost urgency to define these concepts in accordance with the great souls. A materialistic person is usually under the impulse of the usual enemies like lust, anger, etc., how can he, with his defiled mind, contemplate his original transcendental spiritual body? One's natural aversion to purified devotional practice plus one's own immature judgment of the sublime instructions of the scriptures or of the great souls will result unerringly in gross and blatant misconceptions.

For example, even Śrīla Narottama Dās Ṭhākura sings:

*sādhane bhāviva yāhā, siddha dehe pāva tāhā
ragapathera ei se upāya
sādhane ye dhana chāi, siddha dehe tāhā pāi
pakkāpakka matrā sei vicāra
pakile sei prema-bhakti, apakke sādhanā khyāti
bhakti lakṣaṇa anusāra
narottama dāsa kahe, ei yena mora haye
vraja pure anurāge vāsa*

Or, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja instructions in C.C (Adi 3/75)

viddhi bhaktya vraja-bhāva pāite nāhi śakti

Hearing all these and other like verdicts from scriptures, if one will, by blind acceptance, leaves the path of formal regulative practice and jumps to take up these spontaneous practices all of a sudden, he will end up in a sorry plight. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has stressed the nine limbs of devotional service as superior in order to attain to pure devotion to Lord Krishna, out of which the chanting of the Holy Names offenselessly ~~has been singled out to be the most important in order to advance.~~

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has sung in his book 'Kalyāna Kalpataru' :

*viddhi mārṅa ratajane, svadhinatā-ratna dāne
rāgamārge karān praveśa
rāgavaśavati haye, pārakīyā bhāvāśraye
labhe jīva kṛṣṇa premāveśa*

In this regard, the path of formal devotion referred here is the most superior limb, which is chanting of the Holy Names. That is in taking to the inoffensive chanting of the Holy Names rigidly will cause the entrance into the spontaneous path : In this formal regulated devotion there is complete dependence of the spiritual master, devotees and scriptural injunctions. The method as discussed is to strive to free oneself from offenses to the Holy Names. At the same time, one should deliberate on the meaning of the syllable form of the Holy Names during the time of chanting, coupled with sincere heartfelt prayers to Śrī Krishna. The mercy of Lord Krishna will contribute to advancement in such determined practices to reap the desired fruits. However, in not doing this, then one will be reduced to face the dilemma of the fruitive workers and logicians who have to revolve through many births.

As the different limbs of devotional service are employed in regulated devotion, similarly too, these same limbs of devotion like hearing and chanting are used in spontaneous devotional practices. In actuality, these limbs of devotion are not effected by the material senses but undertaken by the medium of the purified senses. The spontaneous practitioner uses these different limbs of devotion according to his natural moods. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has established the chanting of the Holy Names as the ends and means of devotion. In short, to attain love of Godhead, the primary means (sadhana) is this chanting of the Holy Names. All the other different limbs of devotion have to be practiced side by side with this chanting. Even in the topmost stage of recollecting

Krishna's pastimes (līlā smaran), this chanting of the Holy Names goes on. In showing indifference at any point to chanting the Name, is contrary to the instructions of the great souls. Unalloyed surrender to the Holy Names will lead one fortunately to slowly relish the sweetness of the Holy Names, form, qualities and pastimes. On the Name bestowing His causeless mercy on the spiritual aspirant, automatically all the pastimes, form, qualities and the Name will become illuminated in detail, by which one can engage in remembrance and recollection of Śrī Krishna's divine pastimes. Chanting devoid of hearing and hearing without proper chanting ~~can never be possible~~. *Can't be effective.*

Śrīla Rūpa Goswami has informed us of the proper method of devotions (bhajan) :

*tannāma rūpa caritādi sukīrtan-ānu
smṛtyāḥ krameṇa rasanāmanasī niyojya
tiṣṭan braje tadanurāgī janānugāmi
kālam nayed akhilam iti upadeśa sāram*

An aspirant should engage his tempestuous mind with its unlawful desires, in the rigid chanting of the Holy Names, form, qualities and pastimes of the Supreme Lord. On the emergence of natural spontaneous devotion, he should obediently, following the pure denizens of Vraja, practice such devotions in Vraja Dhāma and thus attain to immortality.

In the preliminary stage of practice or 'svaran dasa', the hearing of the Holy Names, form, qualities and pastimes is very necessary. The next stage is the practice of repeating and practicing what has been heard is called 'varana dasa'. The third stage is the 'smarana avastha'. Here, one progresses on to practice with one's own natural loving mood of remembering, concentration, meditation, recollection and leading to complete absorption of such moods (samadhī). When such absorption becomes very smooth without impediments, then it signifies the next

stage, 'apana dasa' where one becomes aware of his own natural spiritual identity. The last stage is when all perfection are achieved in qualifying to be one of the confidential eternal associates of the Supreme Lord. Śrīla Rūpa Goswami has informed the method of cultivation of the Name to us :

*syāt kṛṣṇa-nāma-caritādi-sitāpy avidyā-
pittopatapta-rasanasya na rochikā nu
kintv ādarād anudinam khalu saiva juṣṭā
svādvīkramiād bhavati tad-gada-mūla-hantrī*

(*Upadeśāmṛta*)

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda comments on this verse.

The Holy Names and pastimes of Lord Krishna can be compared to sugar candy and ignorance to the jaundice state of the living entity. Just as one diseased with jaundice (excess bile) cannot taste the sweetness of sugar candy, in the same manner the conditioned soul, having been in ignorance for a long time, cannot taste the sweetness of the Holy Names. Yet, with faith and attentiveness, if he perseveres in chanting the Holy Names uninterruptedly, then step by step, the sweetness of the Holy Names of Śrī Krishna becomes apparent and all his ignorance in the form of material enjoyment etc. becomes dissipated. Just as the patient, in taking the medicine of sugar candy becomes relieved of his disease and after some time begins to relish the sugar candy. A similar verse in Padma Purāṇa explains that the living entity, by ignorance, in his delusion by the illusory energy, becomes enwrapped in his body, wealth and materialistic associates. However, by the strength of the Holy Names, he is able to vanquish his false ego as the dissipation of mist (dew) at sunrise. At that moment, the practice of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa will become most joyful.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura has commented that his book 'Bhajana rahasya', dealing with the remembrance of Krishna's pastimes during the different times of the

day, is actually part of his other book 'Harināma Cintamani. This book, 'Harinām Cintamani' describes the Holy Names and its glories, the shadow Name, offenses to the Holy Names, offenses to the Deity form and the method of practice of devotion. Those intending to attempt to take up the method of 'bhāva' practice (spontaneous) should read this book thoroughly again and again and attempt to understand it. Śrīla Rūpa Goswami, in describing the gradual development of 'prema', writes:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo' tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā ruciḥ tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premīṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramāḥ*

In the beginning, one, by hearing the revealed scriptures from the lips of the saintly people will lead to his initial faith in devotional service being developed. Emergence of faith will lead to the association of the saintly in order to learn from them the method of 'bhajana'. At this point, one takes to the practice of devotional practice. These practices will lead to the dissolving of all kinds of sins presently incurred and which were latent. After this, steadiness arises with fixedness in one devotions. Then from this steadiness, a gradual taste ('ruci') arises from carrying out all these practices. The stage of 'āsakti' is when attraction arises for not only the practice but for the beloved object as well, Śrī Krishna. After this spontaneity ('bhāva') results and when the deepening of such mellows arises, then the pinnacle of such practices which is 'prema' (love of Godhead) is obtained.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura in his book 'bhajana rahasya' has coordinated the eight divisions of the Holy Names (i.e. Hare Krishna) with the eight ascending steps to attain love of Godhead. The object of this being to finally engage in the remembrance of Lord Krishna pastimes during the eight periods of the day. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has written His famous eight instructions

'Sikṣāṣṭaka' in the same vein. (practicing each verse in order leads from faith to 'prema'). Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has compiled the 'bhajana rahasya' by placing during the different eight periods of the day, various scriptural verses that can enhance one's 'adhikāra' or qualification by meditation of such verses with the chanting of the Holy Names increasing from faith to loving mellows. For each period of the day, one verse from Śrīman Mahāprabhu's Sikṣāṣṭaka and also one verse from the famous book 'Govinda Līlāmṛta' were also inculcated for remembrance. For example Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes :-

ādi hare kṛṣṇa arthe avidyā-daman, śraddhāra sahita kṛṣṇa-nāma saṅkīrtana
āra hare kṛṣṇa nāma kṛṣṇa sarva śakti, sādhu saṅge nāmāśraye
bhajanānurakti, sei ta' bhajana-krame sarva anartha-nāśa
tṛtiye viśuddha bhakta charitrera saha, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa nāme niṣṭha
kare aharaḥaḥ
caturthe ahaituki bhakti udipana, ruci saha hare hare nāma
saṅkīrtana ect.

In the same book, the different stages of devotion have been placed accordingly at the different times :

- 1st session (last 3 hours of night). (3am-6am). Nisanta bhajana. Faith arises
- 2nd session (6 am - 9am) association of the saintly, practice and cleansing of an impurities.
- 3rd session (9am-12pm) steadiness in faith
- 4th session (12pm-3pm) natural taste in devotion.
- 5th session (3pm-6pm) deep attachment results.
- 6th session (6pm-9pm) spontaneous devotion.
- 7th session (9pm-12am) love in separation (vipralamba).
- 8th session (12am-3am) conjugal loving mellows (sambhoga).

To classify the nine stages of devotion into the periods of the day, this has been divided in this fashion, with prema also being divided into devotional love in separation and that of mutual meeting.

The main underlying point of all these discussions is that, the method of chanting the Holy Names will give all perfection. This is the authority of the pure devotees and the scriptures. Śrīla Jiva Goswami explains the different stages in Bhakti Sandarbha (256/54),-

In the early stages, one has to hear the Holy Names of the Lord with great attention to purify the mind and senses. Slowly after such purification, one can begin to visualize the form within one's heart. The pure form in the heart gradually reveals itself clearly within one's heart by sincere endeavours, with all its distinct, effulgent qualities. Further, when this Name, form, qualities, pastimes with pure associates of the Supreme Lord becomes perceived in totality, only then can one participate in the practice of remembrance of the Lord's pastimes during the eight times of the day naturally. At each progressive stage, chanting and remembering have also carried out simultaneously

I am requesting eager aspirants, who wish to qualify for relishing such transcendental mellows, to understand thoroughly these holy books of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura like 'Jaiva Dharma', 'Śrī Caitanya Siksāmṛta', 'Harināma Cintamani', 'Bhajana rahasya' etc., in the association of pure devotees. In this context, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda has emphasized the importance of taking shelter of the eight instructions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu ('Sikṣāṣṭaka') with proper practice, in order to advance : For example, by practicing the first four instructions, one's devotion will become mature to qualify one for becoming fixed (niṣṭhā). By rigid practice of the sixth, one will be able to obtain the spiritual body in order practice internal devotions.

Only very fortunate devotees can naturally revel in the practice of remembering the Divine pastimes of Śrī Rādhā Govinda during the eight times of the day. But to unqualified persons it is definitely taboo. As Śrīla Bhaktivinoda explains in 'Caitanya Sikṣāṣṭaka' :- Not all

can engage in this remembrance of Krishna's spiritual confidential pastimes : It is the greatest secret and one has to keep it hidden. One definitely cannot give this knowledge to unqualified people. Until and unless that intense greed for spontaneous devotion has not been aroused in any individual, till that time this information should be kept hidden from him. The Name-form-qualities of Śrī Krishna are all completely transcendental and until this pure transcendental form has not appeared in the heart, till that time one is not qualified to hear such pastimes. Otherwise, the illusory energy will be predominate, resulting in the mundane conception of ordinary man-woman relationships, paving the way to hell for such practitioners. The sincere aspirant should be careful first to acquire the proper spiritual ornaments and purity like the great devotees before venturing into such pastimes. The other option means that the illusory energy will overcome one by darkness and ignorance. Ideally, for those who are qualified to do so, these pastimes have to be always remembered and chanted. Though seemingly human-like pastimes, it is astoundingly awesome in depth, for it relates to the master of all energies, the Supreme Lord : Śrīman Mahāprabhu, in glorifying Raya Rāmānanda of his dealings with the young servant-girls of Lord Jagannātha, has pointed out that only Raya Rāmānanda had such qualification to touch these young girls because he was completely situated in his spiritual body. In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10/33/39)

*vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hrd-rogaṁ āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

Meaning :- He who listens to the transcendental pastimes of Lord Krishna with great faith and describes them, all his impurities in the heart like lust will be destroyed and he will attain pure devotion.

As Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja writes in C.C:

*rāgānugamāрге jāni rāyera bhajana
siddha dehatulya ta' te 'prakṛta' nāhe mana*

One who has a perfected body like Raya Rāmānanda can engage in such high practices of 'bhāva' (spontaneous devotion).

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda writes : A person who, with full faith and with his purified heart (transcendental) listens or describes these spiritual pastimes of Lord Krishna with the gopīs, will result in the remaining impurities like lust being completely uprooted from his heart. The speaker of such transcendental topics, in his realized spiritual realm of experience, will never be unsettled by the modes of material nature. At that level, he can understand his identity in the performance of devotional service to Lord Krishna with certainty. Meanwhile, forgoing all attempts to understand preliminary knowledge (sambandha), the hypocritical devotees want to jump to these love-sports of Śrī Krishna, thinking that by all such immature attempts, their lusty desires would dwindle forever. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has condemned all such materialistic devotees in such practices, by the word 'viśvāsa' (C.C antya 3/45). In (SB 10/33/38) it states that one should not imitate great souls, for just as Lord Śiva who could drink the deadly poison, ordinary people in trying to do so will meet with instant death. This discussion is made to enlighten all so that nobody deviates from the path of pure scriptural authority. After all, the nectarine pastimes are worshipping and the goal of all. Still, such pastimes are not to be meditated upon by those whose minds are defiled with lust and has to be safe-guarded from all such kinds of people. For this reason, my venerable spiritual master, has, at all places and times, recommended all of us to take shelter of the Holy Names. The Holy Names, other than the Supreme Lord, will never cheat us. By his mercy, we will be fortunate to relish the Name, form, qualities and pastimes and emerge successful to obtain

pure devotion to Śrī Krishna { If we cannot for a moment, with a collected mind, chant the Holy Names with patience, how is it possible to attain to the immense wealth of devotions in one stroke? One should strive to take the Holy Names sincerely without offenses and pray fervently to the Holy Names with eagerness for entrance into such pastimes. The Holy Names which is invested with all energies will fulfill all our sincere desires.

GIRI GOVARDHANA-APPEARANCE

The great sage Garga was previously the priest of the Yadu Dynasty. He personally had conducted the ritual of the name-giving ceremony for the divine brothers Krishna and Balarama at the palace of Nanda Baba in Gokula Mahavana. He also related the pastimes of Lord Krishna in full to Saunaka Rsi and this he described in his book 'Garga Samhita'.

In the 'Vrindavana Khand' portion of this book is written: once, seeing the great disturbances in the area of Vraja, Nanda Mahārāja beckoned his confidential friends Sunanda, Upananda, Vrshabanu and other elders for a council and began to address them: "In this area of Mahavana, we are often seeing many calamities. Now all of you should think seriously about what we should do about this". Sunanda, an experienced elder, hearing this remark, "We should not even delay for a minute here but should immediately leave with our children for Vrindavana which is most serene and picturesque. O King, your son Krishna is the life and soul of all the residents of Vraja. Gracious! It is our incredibly good fortune that the young boy was saved from the demons Putana, Trnavarta and Sakada as well as the falling of the huge Yamala Arjuna trees but we cannot be certain that there will not be any further misfortunes. Anyway, we can always return here when things get back to normal'.

To the questions asked by Nanda Mahārāja about the distance of this area from Gokula, its approximate size the appearance of the forest, now beautiful it was and other questions. Sunanda replied: "North-East of Barhisat town, South of Yadupura, West of Sonepure is the area of Mathura Mandal also termed as Vraja by the saintly people. This I have heard from the sage Garga in the house of Vasudeva, that place is even worshipped by the King of holy places 'Prayaga'. In this area is a very superior forest called Vrindavana. This delightful place of

Vrindavana is the most ideal place for the enacting of the wonderful pastimes of Lord Krishna. Even though there is never a greater planet than Vaikuntha and there will never be one in future, still this place Vrindavana is par-excellence in comparison. There too is the presence of the Giriraja mountain surrounded by the beautiful banks of the River Yamuna which flows there; also two prominent mountains stand out called Nandisvara and Vrhatsanu (Barsana). The lush countryside is so incredibly beautiful. The whole area is about twenty-four crores of forest-land which contains pastures for sweet-milk giving cows and also creepers, shrubs and flowers which serve the needs of the cowherd boys and girls.

During the time of periodic annihilation, when Lord Brahma was sleeping, a fierce demon named Sankhacuda stole the Vedas from Brahmaloka by overcoming all the higher planetary demigods and then submerged himself in the ocean. This act diminished the power and luster of the demigods who became frantic with despair. Then the compassionate Supreme Lord Hari, taking the form of a gigantic fish, entered the heavy swirling waters of the vast ocean at the time of periodic annihilation and waged a terrific battle against the demons.

Lord Hari then enacting His fighting pastimes with the demon, finally cut the head of the demon with his sharp disc and returned to the higher planets where the Vedas was reinstated as before. Lord Brahma with other demigods soon very joyfully performed all the necessary purificatory ceremonies for this occasion. The holy place Prayaga was also invited to participate and was coronated with pomp and from this time Prayaga began to be known as the King of the holy places. From then on the fame of Prayaga became gradually wide spread. The Rivers Ganga and Yamuna, with their gentle waves, began to shower on this River their holy waters in the manner of fanning a whisk in adoration. All the other holy places in Jambudvipa arrived there similarly, with the necessary

utensils of worship and worshipped Prayaga Raja with pomp and opulence by authorized procedures. Soon after completing the different rituals of worship and prayer, they began to revert or return to their own place of residence. At this opportune time, the great sage Narada, who was always fond of intrigues, arrived there, singing the songs of Hari as usual with his musical vina. The personified Prayaga greeted him with the usual formalities of cordiality and respect required as when meeting with a great sage. The sage, after being seated on a comfortable sitting place, began to speak: "O Tirtha Raja, you may be the King of all holy places and by right every place is awarding you all respect and worship. However, the holy places in the land of Vraja like Vrindavana have not come to offer you any formal worship, hence you have been insulted by them".

Hearing this words from Devarsi Narada, King Prayaga became infuriated with anger while the sage Narada then continued on his way. With his ire raised, King Prayaga then traversed and reached the spiritual world of the court of Lord Hari. After paying the customary obeisances like circumambulating the Supreme Lord, he, with his hands folded, began to protest with vehemence: "Oh Lord! It is a sure fact that you have made me the King of all pilgrimage centers in the world but except for this Mathura Mandal, all other holy places have paid the necessary tribute to me. This Vraja tirtha, being over intoxicated by pride, has not afforded me the proper worship, in this way slighting me. Please tell me the reason for this". To this out burst, Supreme Lord replied gravely: "It is true that I have placed all the places of pilgrimage under your sovereignty but in My own house you do not have any rulership and I have not entrusted you with as such. You are overly eager to possess My own realm. You have lost your composure and are speaking in an unintelligible fashion. Go back to your own place and listen to My parting words. Mathura Mandal is My own private retreat and supersedes all others. It is above the

three worlds and not destroyed during the time of annihilation, being completely transcendental".

On listening to these poignant words of the Supreme Lord, the personified Prayaga became completely astonished and his pride was vanquished. Soon afterwards, coming directly to Mathura Mandal, he began to pay the necessary obeisances and carried out worship as befitting to this holiest of all places. After the circumbulation of Mathura mandal, he returned to his own abode. At another time of periodic annihilation, the Supreme Lord Sri Hari, appearing as a boar with hard tusks, rescued the Goddess Earth from the depths of the ocean on the brink of Rasatala (lower planet). Amidst the waters, He showed her an amazing sight of beautiful lustrous shrubs and creepers saying to her: "Oh Goddess! In front of you are some divine bushes and shrubs in these waters. This is the land of Mathura mandal which is related to the spiritual world Goloka. Even in the final annihilation, this is never destroyed". The Goddess Earth, on hearing this became surprised, for it was her contention that she was solely maintaining and sustaining all living and non-living things on her land and no one else could do so. But now she actually realized the glories of Vraja. Vraja area is the most elevated of all holy places of pilgrimage and worshipable by all the holy-places including Prayaga Raja. It is eternally existing and completely transcendental. In this holy Vraja, the mountain of Govardhana which is non-different from the divine body of the Lord is present and His most beloved the River Yamuna also flows through this place. To the question of Nanda Mahārāja, the sober Sunanda continued: the Lord of the innumerable worlds and the ruler of Goloka advented from the spiritual world to execute the task of removing the Earth's burden. At that time He requested Srimati Radhika to accompany Him to planet Earth. Srimati Radharani then pleaded, "where the holy Vrindavana is not present or where the Yamuna River or Giri Govardhana is not present, My mind does not take

delight in going to such a place". Giving in to Her request, Lord Sri Hari then gave the order for the whole spiritual 84 crose area of Vraja with all the related spiritual paraphernalia like the Govardhana Mountain and River Yamuna to descend to the planet Earth. This spiritual land of Vraja is praised by all the three worlds.

The Bhu-Mandala planetary system is divided into seven islands resembling a lotus flower in shape, namely: Jambu, Plaksa Salmali, Kusa, Krauncha, Saka, Puskara. Each island is divided further into nine different divisions. In the Ajanabha division of Jambudvipa, by virtue of the eldest son of King Rsabha named Bharatha, this existing region has been termed Bharata Varsa. West of this land called Bharata is the island of Salmali, where from the wife of the mountain Drona, Govardhana Hill became born. On that auspicious occasion, all the demigods began to shower flowers on him and all other great mountains like Himalaya, Sumeru, etc. coming to that place with the usual rites, worship, prayer and circumbulation began to glorify him. The main predominating mountains prayed thus: "Oh Govardhana! You have appeared from the spiritual world Goloka Vrindavana where the omniscient Lord Krishna resides with His confidential associates-cowherd boys and maidens. From today, you are the King of all the mountains like us. Also, You are the ornament or crown-jewel of Goloka. You are the form of the umbrella of the all-absolute Supreme Brahman. I offer my obeisances to you". The mountains, after glorifying Govardhana in this way, went back to their respective homes. Henceforth Govardhana began to be called by the name 'Giriraja', King of the mountains.

At one time the sage Pulastya, while touring the different places of pilgrimage, came to the spot where Giriraja was situated. He observed the wonderful serenity of the cool flowing breezes and the lush beauty of the greenery of shrubs and bushes with their intertwined variety of fruits and flowers. It was rampant with various

auspicious sounds of peacocks intermingled with those of other birds and animals. In short, a perfect environment for austerity. Thus being dazzled and captivated by the impeccable beauty of Giriraja, the sage approached his father Dronachal with a desire to possess this mountain. Dronachal Mountain, as usual, bestowed the necessary respect and honor on the arrival of the great Rsi. The Rsi, being pleased by the warm reception given, spoke: "Oh King of Mountains Drona! You are worshipped by all the demigods and the repository of all divine herbs. You are that which sustains the life of all living beings. I, a resident of Kasi, have come with this sole request that you give your son to me for I have no need for anything else. In Kasi even sinful people who die there immediately attain liberation. There the River Ganga flows to the North and Lord Visvanatha is actually present there in person. At that place I will place your son Govardhana replete with its beautiful surroundings and practice my austerities. This type of desire have somewhat surfaced in my heart". Hearing these words of saint Pulastya Drona Giri, with tears running from his cheeks due to extreme affection for his beloved son, began to speak: "Oh sage! This son is very dear to me; though I cannot bear any separation from my son but because of my fear of your irate curse, I will put my son under your care according to your desire." He then summoned his son and addressing him, told him to accompany the sage to the land of fruitive work-Bharata Varsa where all the four-fold objects of life can be obtained up to liberation.

Thus in obedience to the order of his father, Govardhana began to accede to the wishes of Pulastya Muni. However, he informed the sage: "I am 8 yojanas in length, 5 yojanas in breadth and 2 yojanas in height. How will you possibly carry me to your residence?" The Muni replied: "My son, if you please seat yourself on the palm of my right hand, I will carry you in this manner and walk to Kasi". Sri Govardhana Deva then replied with a

condition: "Oh Muni, in the course of wandering, if you, unable to bear my weight, place me at any one spot, then I will never move from that spot at any event, this is my promise". Pulastya Muni replied similarly, "My son, don't worry, I too, from this Salmalidvipa right down to Kosaladesh will never place you along the path and this is my word". Without further ado, the Mountain Govardhana, after paying obeisances to his tearful and distressed father, climbed unto the palm of the Muni. The great sage then revealing his extraordinary mystic powers by holding the Govardhana Hill with his right hand, began to trudge along the path until finally he reached the land of Vraja Mandala. At this juncture, Govardhana became haunted with past reminiscences and began to reflect: "The Lord of the infinite universes, complete in Himself, Lord Sri Krishna, will advent in person in this land of Vraja. Here in this place He will perform many sweet and wonderful pastimes with His cowherd friends and other associates in loving mellows. Therefore I will never leave this land of Vraja especially by these banks of Yamuna and go elsewhere. Sri Krishna will appear here with Srimati Radhika from Goloka, and by Their pure vision, I will be able to achieve all perfection". Contemplating in this way, he began to resort to his full weight on the palm of the Muni, the sage, being heavily taxed and overburdened to the extremes by such incredible weight, placed the mountain on the ground and left undaunted to do his daily purificatory rituals, forgetting his vow. After completing his systematic bath, toilet followed by his daily meditation on the Gayatri mantra, he again approached Govardhana to be seated on his palm but this time Govardhana refused to budge. The sage then began to attempt by the force of his own spiritual powers to lift him but in vain; he then tried incessantly to plead and coax him but the mountain did not move an inch. Finally, Govardhana spoke reminding the sage: Oh Muni! This is no fault of mine. You have placed me here voluntarily on your own will but my

previous condition still stands which is, I will never move once being placed on any spot along the path of the journey to Kasi". The Muni became angered by these words of Govardhana which penetrated into his very being and with trembling lips counteracted with a curse at the mountain 'tasmatu tilamatram hi nityam tvam ksinatam vraja'

"You have impudently refused to accede to my earnest request O mountain, henceforth, you will reduce in size by the measure of 1 till seed daily".

After proclaiming this verdict, the Muni returned to his native place Kasi and from then on as a result, Govardhana began to be reduced by the size of one till daily. Sananda concluding to Nanda Mahārāja on the appearance of Govardhana, commented: "Until the time, the Ganga and Giririja in this earth will exist, for that time vile Kali cannot exert its dire influence on the planet Earth".

The pastime by which the stone form of the Govardhana mountain becomes reduced in size is another feature of the inconceivable potency of Lord Sri Krishna. In these pastimes relating to the Govardhana mountain everything happened by the Absolute will of the Supreme, the sage being a mere agent. Here Sri Krishna, in the form of His devotee, has appeared to exhibit the proper way of servitorship as an ingredient in His pastimes. The same Sri Krishna saying: "I am this mountain" repeatedly in His original form as Sri Krishna accepted the natural adoration and worship of the residents of Vraja also besides exhibiting reciprocally His own affection for them. The devotion of Srila Rupa-Raghunatha for this Govardhana Hill is beyond description:

*vibhīraṇo yaḥ śrī bhujadandopari bhartu-
śchātribhāvaṁ nāma yathārtham svamakāṣṭi
kṛṣṇopajñam yasya makhaṣṭiṭṭhati sohayam*

pratyasaṁ me tvam kuru govardhana purnāṁ

He was situated on the hand of his master Lord Krishna like an umbrella, earning his name consequently as the King of Mountains (Giriraja). The sacrifice of this worship of Govardhana was first introduced by Lord Krishna. May that Govardhana Hill satisfy all my aspirations!

*jhamajjhamitī varṣati stanīta cakravikriḍayā
viniṣṭharavimayādale ghana ghaṭābhirākhaṇḍale
rarakṣa dharani dharoddhī tipaṭuḥ kutumbāni yāḥ
sa dārayatu dharuṇāṁ vraja purandaraste dharam*

When King Indra unleashed the huge clouds with their rumbling sounds which covered the sun and began to cause heavy showers with splattering sounds of 'jham! jham!', at that time Lord Krishna holding Govardhana Hill, protected His own kinsmen and loving devotees. May the Lord Krishna protect us from all fears. Sri Govardhana is very affectionate to His devotees and easily gives His lotus feet to His own surrendered devotees, protecting them from all fear and lamentation, granting them all fearlessness. However, we can pray to Him in this way, May Sri Govardhana grace this lowly soul by his merciful glance! Only by his causeless mercy can I remain obedient to Sri Rupa-Raghunatha and be entranced in the service of the spiritual master who is the pure servitor of Sri Rupa-Raghunatha".

*saptāhaṁ murajit karāmbuja paribrājat kaṁṣṭhāṅguli
prodyad valgu varāṭa kopari mila mugdha dvirepho' api yāḥ
pāṭhaḥkṣepak śatrunakra mukhataḥ krode vrajāṁ drāgapāt
kastuṁ gokula bādhavaṁ girivaraṁ govardhanaṁ nāśrayet*

The mountain Govardhana while being lifted and held for seven days with the little finger of his master Lord Krishna, remained like an intoxicated bee in His lotus hand while protecting the whole of Vraja from fearsome rains. Why do not living entities take shelter of Govardhana Hill?

*giri-urpa haridāsa śreṇi varyeti nāmām
 mṛtam idam uditam śrī rādhikā vaktra chandrāt
 vrajanabha tilakatve klṛpta vedaili sphuṭam me
 nija nikata nivāsam deli govardhana tvam*

The nectar of your name as the best of the servants of Sri Krishna have been uttered by the lotus mouth of Srimati Radhika Herself. The Vedas have placed you as the tilak mark adorning the land of Vraja. My prayer to you, O Govardhana, is to allow me to reside in proximity to you.

This lowly self in obedience to the path chalked out by Srila Rupa-Raghunatha through to my spiritual master pray, that Sri Govardhana may protect me from all obstacles to the devotional path. In this way by giving up all false prestige, I may be able to drench everyone with the pure devotional conclusions of scriptures. May I therefore remain fixed in the service of Sri Guru, Vaishnavas and the Supreme Lord”!

GIRI GOVARDHAN-PASTIMES

At that time of the Autumn season, Lord Sri Krishna entering into the beautiful forest groves of Vrindavan, begin to blow melodious notes on His flute. At that time, hearing this music, the cowherd damsels of Vrindavan, being overcome by pure loving sentiments while in contemplation of His Lotus Feet, begin to recite and sing of Lord Krishna's untarnished fame and glories saying, 'Oh companions ! One who does not take shelter of the great souls can never attain the object of their desired ends. Only the devotees of Supreme Lord Hari are outstanding and are considered great. Of them, Sri Govardhana, the King of Mountains is the chief. This I have personally heard from the lips of our most Noble Gargi Devi. Therefore this very day, we will take a bath in the Lake of 'Manasa Ganga' and consequently visit the original Deity of Narayana named 'Sri Harideva' by that place. This will pacify our spiritual elders and they will not be moved with suspicion of our whereabouts. Usually our most beloved Sri Krishna (Lord of souls) sports there in that place and we will definitely get an opportunity to meet Him there". Hence, formulating this plan of action the cowherd damsels began to glorify Sri Govardhana which was the means for attaining their beloved object Sri Krishna (Bhag 10/21/18)

*hantāyam adrī abalā hari-dāsa-vāyo
yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-carāṇa-sparāśa-pramodaḥ
mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayoḥ tayor yat
pānīnya-sūyavaśa-kandara-kandamūlaiḥ*

"Oh destitute companions! Govardhana is experiencing great exhilaration in feeling the touch of the lotus feet of Sri Krishna and Rama, for this reason he worships the cows and the cowherd boys, by providing them all facilities in the form of fresh water, fruits and roots, fresh grasses replete with caves for their resting places. He is the best of all the devotees of Lord Hari".

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has mentioned in his commentary that of all the devotees or pure servitors of Lord Hari, Yudhithira, Uddhava and Govardhana are the most superior and of these three, Sri Govardhana Hill is the best servitor. The contact of the muddy foot-prints of Sri Krishna and Rama on the stony surface of Govardhana, leaves the tell-tale marks of the auspicious thunderbolt, the flag, goad imprinted on the stone which begin causing Sri Govardhana to experience great ecstasy. His tears of bliss results in water-falls cascading from Govardhana and the fresh buds of grass which sprout from the very mountain slopes represent his condition of horripilation (ecstatic symptoms). The 'Rama' that is implied here in the verse, is used incidentally to cover the deep transcendental emotions of the gopi dearest of Sri Krishna (meaning Srimati Radharani). 'Rama' can be interpreted to mean one who engages in loving sports with Sri Krishna. The word 'abala' here means one who is indifferent of the protection of their husbands while desiring eagerly to secure the shelter of Sri Krishna who is their only strength, ['bala']. 'Yat' means because of experiencing great ecstasy He worships the cowherd boys with their cows to obtain the mercy of Lord Krishna. Govardhana Mountain therefore supplies the cows and cowherd boys and Sri Krishna with fresh spring water for drinking, gargling, including washing their legs also provides sweet beverages like honey and different juices from the various fruit-trees like mango juice as refreshment, etc. Dhurva grass which is used to make respectable offerings (argya), plus fragrant fresh green pastures for all the cows which are nourishing and milk producing. For lodging and taking rest during the cold winter seasons or in the extreme heat of the summer, there are hollows or deep caves which serve these purposes. For a nutritious repast, there are fresh fruits and roots which are succulent and bountiful. In that place too, all the necessary ingredients of service to Lord Krishna are naturally present like jeweled daises, pedestals and lights.

In the same chapter of Srimad Bhagavatam it mentions that the Supreme Lord (10/25) manifested a gigantic figure and ate all the offered foodstuffs of the residents of Vraja, thereby increasing their faith in Him, in that event. After this incident, adoration or worship of cows, which are the livelihood of the denizens of Vraja, is mentioned. The cows are usually worshipped by provision of fresh grass and water.

Srila Rupa Goswami writes in his prayer to Govardhana:

*vindad bhiryo mandiratāṁ kaudera vṛndaiḥ
kaiṇdaiścendor bandhu bhirānanda yatīsam
vaiduryā bhairnirjhura toyair api sohayam
pratyāśāṁ me tvam kuru govardhana puruṣam*

He who pleases Lord Sri Krishna in his enacting of nectarine pastimes by the provision of such ingredients as a nest of cozy caves for rest, succulent roots tasting like ambrosia and sparkling crystal cascading water. May this Sri Govardhana fulfill all my hopes and longings.!

Sri Raghunatha Das Goswami has prayed for residence in proximity to Govardhana Hill with the following verse :-

*pramada madanaḥ līlā kandare kandare te
racayati navayūnor dvandam asminn amandan
iti khila kalānārtham laṅghakas tad-dvayor me
nija nikata-nivāsaṁ dehi govardhana tvam*

The Divine Couple have in great bliss performed many profound and sweet loving pastimes while nestling in your caves. For this reason, I have become most eager to get the divine vision of this transcendental Couple. Therefore, please allow me to stay in proximity with you.

*anupama-manivedi ratnasimha sanorvi
ruhajhara-darasanudroni-sanghesu rangair
saha bala-sakhibhiḥ sankhelayan sva-priyam me
nija-nikata-nivasam dehi govardhana tvam*

Oh! Govardhana Hill, may you grant my obsession to stay in proximity with you because you are the cause for the diverse delightful sports of Lord Krishna with His cowherd friends under the tree tops, in rocky caves, valleys and amidst the plains with the presence of necessary ingredients like super-excellent jeweled daises and thrones while you yourself experience great ecstasy in witnessing such sports.

*Sthala-jala-tala-śaṣpair bhūruha-chāyayā ca
paripadam anukālāni hanta samvardhayan gāḥ
tri-jagati nija-gotram sārthakam khyāpayan me
nija-nikaṣa nivāsani dehi govardhana tvam*

Oh Govardhana! You are always providing for the nourishment of cows by supplying them with water, leaves, green grass together with protection from the sun by the presence of shady trees thus increasing their pleasure (go-var dhana: increasing the pleasure of the cows). You have been glorified in all the three worlds because of this. Therefore please give me a place of proximity to you whereby I may have the chance to see the rare divine sight of Lord Krishna when He is returning home from pasturing the cows.

Lord Sri Krishna did conduct the sacrifice and worship of Govardhana through His own beloved devotees i.e., the residents of Vraja. In the age of Kali, His merciful incarnation, Lord Gaurasundara also initiated and induced His confidential associates to perform the worship of Govardhana. Once, Sri Sankarananda Sarasvati came to Sri Puri dhama from Sri Vrindavana to deliver to Srīman Mahāprabhu a piece of the Govardhana stone together with a string of 'gunja mala' (beads) wrapped in two bundles of cloth which he presented to Srīman Mahāprabhu who, at that time was residing at Gambhira. The Lord became exceedingly pleased on receiving these invaluable items. In continuous remembrance of the divine pastimes of Sri Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, He used to wear the mala (beads) round His neck. By contemplation of the

Govardhana stone as non-different from the transcendental body of Sri Krishna, He used to place this stone over His head and eyes, becoming overwrought with loving emotions. In the loving moods, He would exuberantly place it on His head or near His nose as if to catch the overpowering transcendental fragrance of the stone and more often than not, would drench it with tears flowing from His eyes. In this regard, Srīman Mahāprabhu used to visualize the Govardhana stone and the gunja mala together as the personification of the Divine Couple Sri Radha-Krishna. He, in this manner conducting worship of the Govardhana stone for a succession of three consecutive years, later handed it over to His most affectionate associate Sri Raghunatha Das Goswami speaking ;

*prabhu kahe ei śilā kṛṣṇera vighraha
ihāra sevā kara tumi kariyā āgraha
ei śilāra kara tumi sattvikā pūjāna
achirat pābe tumi kṛṣṇa-prema-dhāna*

Srīman Mahāprabhu instructed : The method of worshipping the Govardhana stone is very simple. Simply bath the stone by using a pot of water together with eight Tulasi manjaris which is to be offered with devotion to the Govardhana stone on both sides. {A Tulasi manjari is contained between two Tulasi leaves:}

The great soul Sri Raghunatha, having obtained these priceless items from the hands of Srīman Mahāprabhu Himself, realizing His internal moods by His mercy began to engage in the service of the Govardhana stone with great devotion. In worship, he placed on the feet of the stone, the gunja beads which were the representation of Srimati Radhika. His bliss in his devotional service knew no limit. His only ingredients for worship was one water pot for collecting water, two pieces of cloth each the measure of half an arm length and small wooden pedestal. He, by this type of devoted worship, began to actually perceive the pure form of Sri Krishna - Vrajendra-

nandana- during the course of worship and meditation. Srila Krsna Das Kaviraja writes:

*jala tulasīra sevāya sukhodaya
sadaśopacāra pūjāya tata sukha naya*

His joy that he experienced in worship was beyond comparison, more so that what one could possibly attain by using all the sixteen articles to worship in a grand way. The Lord who is naturally affectionate to His devotees becomes completely subjugated by pure devotional service only. In Vishnu-dharma, there is mention of how the Lord can be bought over by in devotional service. In this context, how Sri Advaita Acarya was able to move the Supreme Lord to hear his pleas is given :

*tulasī dala mātreyā jalasya culukena vā
vikriyite svamātmānam bhaktyebhya bhakta vatsalāḥ*

Lord Krishna, being overcome by the spontaneous affection of His devotee, becomes bought by such devotees in the course of offering Tulasi leaves and a handful of water. In Caitanya Caritamṛta it mentions :

*kṛṣṇake tulasī jala deya yei jana
lāra ṛṇa śodhite kṛṣṇa karen chintan*

Sri Advaita Acarya began to reflect that the faithful devotee, in simply offering some handful of water and Tulasi leaves to the Supreme Lord in pure devotion, will result in Sri Krishna not being able to free Himself from His great debt to such a pure devotee. Therefore, only by the Supreme Lord manifesting His original form, will He be able to give up His debt.

Therefore Advaita Acarya, in order to make Sri Krishna appear in His original form began to offer with great devotion, some holy Ganga water and a few Tulasi manjaris. The inaugurator of religious principles, Sri Krishna appeared to exhibit the magnanimous pastimes of Lord Caitanya in order to distribute love of Godhead and to fulfill the prayers of His great devotee Sri Advaita

Acarya. In the Srimad Bhagavatam, the world teacher Lord Brahma glorifies the Lord in this way :-

*tvaṁ bhakti-yoga-paribhāvita-hṛt-saroja
āśase śrutekṣita-patho nanu nātha puṁsām
yad-yad-dhiyā ta urugāya vibhāvayanti
tad-tad-vapuḥ praṇayase sad-anugrahāya*

(3/9/11)

"Oh Lord! The means of obtaining You by devotional service becomes available through oral reception of the messages and instructions of the spiritual master. You are present in the heart of Your devotees who have become purified by devotional service to You. The devotees in this way worship You with their individual natures while You, by Your causeless mercy, reciprocate with them in that very form of their meditations. ('srute ksitapato' - one who, after hearing from Sri Guru and later by initiation, embarks on devotional service- Srila Visvanatha Thakura). Consequently, Srila Raghunatha Das Goswami was exemplary in his method of worshipping Gira Govardhna with pure devotion.

Once on the order of Sri Svarupa Damodara, Govinda the servant of Sriman Mahaprabhu, began to send him daily some sweet meats ('sandesh') for offering to the Govardhana Sila. Srila Raghunatha das began to start offering these sweets to the Lord with great feeling. The Supreme Lord, unable to resist the offerings of His pure devotee, began to virtually devour these offerings with great relish and joy. Srila Raghunatha das in his Manah siksa, has given the method or the way of worshipping Sri Govardhana Hill :-

*samam śrī-rūpeṇa smaravivaśa-rādhi-giribhṛto
vraje sākṣāt-sevā-labhanavidhaye tad-gaṇa-yujoh
tad-ijya akhyā-dhiyāna-śravaṇa-nati-pañchāmṛtāni-idam
dhayan nityā govardhanam anudinam tvaṁ bhaja manah*

"Oh mind! You should be in obedience to Sri Rupa Goswami who, in the association of Sri Lalita Devi and

Subala, the transcendental servitors strive for the divine service of the transcendental couple Sri Radha-Krishna who are always merged in the conjugal devotional mellows.

In other words, drink the nectar of service to Sri Govardhana in the form of correct worship to Him, by chanting his glories, hearing his glories, meditating and paying obeisances to him with devotion as a daily function.

Sri Srila Prabhupada, in his commentary writes (CcAntya 6th chapter):

The form of Govardhana is directly Vraja-nandana Sri Krishna. Sriman Mahaprabhu verifying this stone as the spiritual body of Sri Krsna, worshipped it continuously for three years, afterwards enlightening the heart of Sri Raghunatha Das and inducing him with this transcendental service. Many so-called followers of the traditional varna-asrama system pose as devotees externally, but by nature are both atheistic and materialists to the core. These people are naturally antagonistic to the devotees and make them the target of their baseless accusations. For example, they consider the deity form of the Lord as material, the spiritual master as an ordinary man and they try to judge the devotee according to his previous birth and caste. In this regard they dare to suggest that Srila Raghunatha Das was not of brahmin caste and because of not having taken brahmin initiation was not a bona fide brahmin. The contention of this envious people is that unless one is born from brahmin family by right, no pure devotee can touch or worship the deity form of the Lord. In committing such great offense to the lotus feet of the pure devotee, these revilers will be forced to be degraded into hellish lives. The novice devotee (kanistha) and the middling (madhyama) devotee has to be very careful in the association of these type of offenders. The symptoms of these so-called ritual brahmins is that they usually consort with women and

can never hope to come to the proper standard of the pure devotees, inevitably making their destination to the Hellish planets. (commentary end).

In the Srimad Bhagavatam and the works of Srila Rupa Goswami, the astounding beauty of Govardhana Hill with its lush grass, sweet fruits and roots, water falls and cozy cave have all been described. Even if this does not present itself to our vision, still not an iota of these statements are false. Sri Govardhana is the actual form of the Supreme Lord, completely spiritual in nature and therefore how is it possible to understand Him through our turbulent personal senses ? Nonetheless, the original pure form of Govardhana can be identified if our senses become gradually spiritualized in the devotional service of the transcendental whole.

YOGA MĀYĀ AND MAHĀ MĀYĀ

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written of the principle of energy. The three modes of material nature is material energy called 'Mahā-Māyā and is responsible for the material activities like creation and destruction. As long as the living entity is engrossed in sense gratification till then he comes under this influence of illusory energy. He is able to escape from this abominable material energy only on realization of his innate blissful spiritual identity in relation with transcendence. The question is asked do the devotees come under any energy at all? The answer is yes, we are part of the marginal energy but having escaped the realm of material energy, we are now under the safe protection of the spiritual energy. The opposition sometimes raise this question "so are you all the worshippers of the female personification of Divine energy" (sakta)? The answer is "yes" we are under the shelter of the personification of spiritual energy Śrīmatī Rādhārānī. We are practicing devotions entirely under Her direction. We can compare ourselves in this sense as Saktas and are therefore non-different from the devotees (Vaishnavas). On the contrary, those not taking shelter of this spiritual potency but only have attraction for the material aspect are not considered devotees but are simply sense enjoyers. In Nārada Pañcaratra, Dūrga Devī says: "I am Your loving partner in your delightful Vṛndāvana pastimes in the form of Your internal pleasure potency". We perceive from the statement of Dūrga Devī that this energy is non-dual. In the transcendental feature, this energy is present as Śrīmatī Radhika and in the material form manifests as the material energy. The question is sometimes raised by the opposition that The smarta brahmīns say that the energy of Lord Śiva is the foremost energy (śakti). Why is this?

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda replies. The material nature is composed of the three modes: goodness, passion and

ignorance. The brahmins who are oriented in goodness worship the demigod in that material mode of goodness; those in passion worship the demigods in passion while those in the mode of ignorance worship "material nature" as knowledge. In actual fact, there is no separate energy called material energy and "Māyā" is just a transformation of the spiritual potency. It is but the shadow energy of the pure spiritual potency of the Lord. The material energy is mainly responsible for the conditioning of the living entity as a form of punishment due to his forgetfulness of his relationship with the Supreme Lord. The living entity, on regaining his lost relationship with the Lord becomes surcharged with knowledge and bliss. However, if the material energy, becomes predominant, it makes the living entities in his forgetfulness to refer to this illusory energy (Māyā) as all in all. This explains the worship of material nature (sakta). Gradually, the bewildered living entity, by long period of accumulation of pious merit, can be impelled into the position of acquiring divine knowledge (Vaishnava).

The question is raised again: do we sometimes compare Dūrḡa Devī to be a transcendental associate within the precincts of Gokula? The answer given by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is:-yes! In the spiritual world, Dūrḡa Devī is called YogaMāyā. She is present as the seed-form in the changes of the spiritual energy. For this reason, she considers herself non-different from the original internal energy of the spiritual world. YogaMāyā, also can be transformed into material energy. or shadow potency The material Goddess Dūrḡa Devī is the servitor of the spiritual aspect of the same Dūrḡa Devī . The spiritual Dūrḡa Devī plays an important part in Lord Krishna variegated pastimes as YogaMāyā. The Srimad Bhagavatam (10/29/20) describes how the Lord takes shelter of His own internal potency in the love-sports of the gopīs.(YogaMāyā anupāśritaḥ). The internal energy which nourishes such divine pastimes may look like ignorance but in reality are an essential ingredient in the

blossoming of these transcendental sports. The opposition then raises the query if so, why do the devotees not honor the remnants of Goddess Dūrga and other demigods? Why specifically Vishnu prasadam?

The answer is, Lord Krishna is the sole Supreme Lord and all the demigods are His loyal servants. The leavings of the pure devotees if partaken gives rise to pure devotion. The remnants of the food partaken by the pure devotees, the dust of their lotus feet and the water that washes their feet are highest and most conducive to devotion. The fact is, the impersonalists make a show of worshipping the Deity and offer foodstuffs to them but the demigods neither appreciate their worship nor accept such foodstuffs seeing their ignorance by the verdict of scriptures. Ultimately, worship of the demigods is a form of impersonalism. To accept foodstuffs from such impersonalists is detrimental to pure devotion and the Goddess of Devotion becomes offended by this action. On the other hand, if a pure devotee offers remnants of foodstuffs of Lord Krishna (Krishna prasadam) to the demigods, then they all dance in joy. These remnants of the demigods are then partaken with relish by the devotees (mahāprasadam). In the yoga scriptures, one should never accept the remnants of any demigod. Here the sole reason for such refusal is that they are able to remain steadfast in their meditations in doing so and not in any way wanting to be offensive to the demigods. Usually, in the practice of devotion, remaining loyal and unalloyed to one's worshipable Deity is beneficial while partaking of the remnants of the foodstuffs of other Deities does not contribute to the practice of such devout or loyal worship of one's beloved Deity. In conclusion, there is no question of offense involved in such practices, to obtain spiritual advancement one has to follow scriptural injunctions verbatim.

Lord Krishna has an eternally youthful form and He is the Undivided Absolute Truth. He exhibits Supreme

Majesty and uncommonness in His prabhava and vibhava forms. Again, His expansions are two-fold, direct expansions (āṁśa) and empowered incarnations (satya vasha). Further, His childhood and youthful pastimes are of different contrast and moods. Even though He performs His pastimes in these six different ways He remains the sole Absolute Supreme Being unchanged in any way. He is the possessor of directly opposing qualities, characteristic of only the Supreme Power in the Spiritual dimension. In Him are present all fame, opulence, knowledge, wealth, renunciation and beauty to the highest degree, unraveling His extraordinary sweetness. His spiritual energy is called the internal energy and all divine spiritual planets have manifested as a result of this energy. The marginal energy gives rise to the innumerable living entities together with the liberated souls. The external material energy helps to create the different material universes.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comments on the prabhava and vibhava pastimes:- that which has the four-handed form of Lord Hari in existence, knowledge and bliss is the prabhava form and while when it differs slightly from the actual four-handed form then it is termed vaibhava. Prabhava signifies predominance of Lordship or mastery and vaibhava denotes mysticism or uncommonness. Prabhava expansions are of two categories, one type occurs at the end of yugas and is only for a brief period like Mohini, Hamsa and Sukla ect. The other type is not so common like, Danvantari, Rṣabha, Vyāsadeva, Dattatreya and Kapiladeva. The category of vaibhava expansions include Kurma, Matsya, Nara-Nārāyaṇa, Varāha, Prisnigarbha, Yajñā, Vibhu, Hari, Vamāna, Visvakṣena, and all the fourteen Manus in their different Manvantaras. That one Supreme Lord, whose energies are beyond this mundane material world, is present in four distinct features as stated by Śrīla Jīva Goswami is his Bhāgavat Sandarbha. These features are His transcendental and original form, His Splendor

consisting of the spiritual worlds, the living entity and inert material nature. As an analogy, this four features can be compared to the sun whose different aspects are the form of sun's effulgence, sun globe, sun's rays and the reflection of the sun's rays or its shadows. A huge blazing fire may be situated in one place but the effects of its effulgence may be permeated a long distance away. Similarly the energies of the Supreme Lord are permeated throughout the universe though He is situated in one place as in the Spiritual World, as verified by Visnu Purāṇa.

The Śrutis describe the Supreme Lord as whose tiny rays of effulgence are the myriad living entities. Inconceivably, the source of energy can be equal to its diverse energies. This inconceivable energies are three-fold in division the internal, marginal and external potency. It is inconceivable because it can make impossible things happen. The internal spiritual potency has resulted in the transcendental form of the Supreme Lord plus the colossal spiritual world like Goloka and Vaikuṇṭha which are manifestation of this energy. The marginal energy consists of the many living entities which are but rays of the Supreme, while the material energy gives rise to the gross and subtle material coverings in this universe, or in turn the shadow potency of the original spiritual energy. These three different energies are described in Vishnu Purāṇa. The material energy is in charge of deluding the minute spiritual sparks (jīva soul) with ignorance and which causes them to work with desires for fruits of work. The external material energy is inferior by nature, still it has the power of bewildering the marginally-situated superior living entity. The living entity by origin being transcendental but by identifying with the three modes of material nature becomes entangled. The effects of the material energy manifests in varying degrees depending on the position of Lord Brahma down to the non-moving living entities. Thus the original spiritual spark in its ignorance is compelled to suffer the bad effects of this

material energy. In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1/7/5), it is explained that the only way to escape the effects of this insurmountable material energy, is to practice constant and unmotivated devotional service to the Supreme Lord and not otherwise. In Bhagavad Gītā (7/13-14)

*tribhīr guṇa-mayair bhāvair ebhīḥ sarvaṁ idaṁ jagat
mohitair nābhijānāti mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam
daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etān taranti te*

Meaning :- The three modes of material nature are under working under My direction and belong to the inferior energy but the living entities are influenced by their interactions.

(ii) The three modes of material nature form the inferior energy, by their effects, all the living entities are deluded and are not able to know My divine nature”.

(iii) Śrīla Cakravartipada, on this third verse *Daivyesa*”, has commented the fallen living entities, due to the desire to extract enjoyment from material nature, have become bewildered by the demigods. Śrī Rāmānujācārya has defined the word “*daivī*” as that created for the sport of the demigods or that which is instigated by the demigods. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyabhusana has commented that *Devī* means not out of this world, or very extraordinary material energy and for the conditioned souls, extremely unsurpassable. Those who surrender to My divine form can cross over this ocean of material existence.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:- The Supreme Lord is the storehouse and controller of all energies. All these energies internal, marginal and material are His maidservants. Simply by His sweet will, He sets into motion all these variety of energies. The tiny infinitesimal living speck, though possessing in a minute measure the qualities of the Supreme Lord, can be deluded by this strong material nature. *Miyate anāya iti māyā*- that which

can be measured is called Māyā. However, this illusory energy serves as a yard stick to identify the different worlds like the material world, living entities and the spiritual world. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the master of this material energy while the living entity can be subjugated by this material energy. The Svetasvatara Śruti (4/9-20)

yasmānmāyī srjate viśvam etat tasmīn ca anyo māyayā sanniruddhaḥ

māyāntu prakṛtiṁ vidyān mayinnantu mahēśvaram:

The Lord creates this universe from material elements and the living entity being influenced by the material energy, becomes entangled by it. The controller of the material nature is the Supreme Lord who pervades the whole cosmic manifestation. The word 'māyī' refers to Lord Krishna who is the powerful ruler of all energies. The minute living entity, even on liberation, cannot equal this state, for the Supreme Autocrat creates the entire material world plus the spiritual worlds. His material creation is done through the agency of Lord Brahma. In Brahma Sutra (4/4/19). Learned scholars confirm there is an eternal gulf of difference between the living entity and the Lord.

What is the difference between the illusory energy (Māyā) and ignorance (avidyā)? The illusory energy is the energy of Śrī Krishna and with this, He creates the entire material worlds and these energies that have been unleashed also serves the purpose of rectifying the fallen entities, . Material energy has two functions (1) avidyā or ignorance (2) Pradhan or existing material nature in inert condition. Ignorance (avidyā) causes the binding of the living entity while the existing inert material nature evolves as the whole material universe under impulse i.e., while (avidyā) ignorance is the cause of the unwanted desires of the living entities, the inert material nature leads after stimulus to become the cosmic material creation. Material energy too has two categories 1) Knowledge, 2) Ignorance.

The knowledge aspect is that which enlightens the living entity to liberation while the ignorant aspect binds the living entity. When the action of the knowledge feature springs into motion, one becomes inclined to the devotional service of the Lord, and when one forgets Śrī Krishna, that is the play of ignorance (avidyā). The knowledge of the Absolute Truth is all included under this action of knowledge. At the start, this entails intelligent discrimination and proper effort to cultivate such knowledge.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam Lord Kapila deva's teachings, the Supreme Lord is the master of the three modes of nature. Śrī Rāmānuja has written in his 'Gītā Bhasya' of 'Māyā' which is stated as when the actual identity of the Supreme Lord becomes covered in one's vision and one's own self becomes enmeshed in the selfish enjoying mentality, this is the work of 'Māyā'. Due to this form of delusive energy, the whole world cannot fathom the blissful Supreme Controller. The only solution is in complete surrender to the lotus feet of the Lord. Śrī Rāmānuja explains "one who is endowed with right thought, compassionate, equal to all beings without distinction and surrendered to the Supreme Lord can hope to cross over this ocean of material existence. One should, by worshipping Him, completely give up 'Māyā', illusory energy. In the writings of Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana we see:- The Supreme Lord is very affectionate to His devotees and those who are surrendered to Him, will easily be able to cross over the material existence. This material existence is compared to a huge ocean which can instantly be reduced to a hoof-print of a cow by such surrender. The word 'mām eva' means one who is exclusively surrendered to Śrī Krishna and not anyone else, for surrender to the other demigods like Lord Śiva does not entail liberation. The Śrutis say that those who know the Supreme Lord in truth can become immortal.

Once the demigods had informed King Mucukunda "

Oh King, may good fortune be upon you!; whatever you may desire other than complete liberation can be awarded by us but only Lord Vishnu can bestow liberation". Sridhar Swami writes; Pure devotion with surrender is required to overcome the three modes of nature ;The word 'eva' is used to demonstrate single-pointed devotion to the Supreme Lord. Bereft of this process of devotion, by the influence of this divine material energy, one may have to wander through countless wombs due to ignorance or pray to the different demigods and thus end up rotatating up and down this universe. All this is the snare of 'Māyā' and the incredible effects of this energy have been described in detail in the Markandeya Purāṇa. The next question is what is the nature and position of the living entity? Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes from Gītā:-

*bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyurḥ khañ mano buddhir eva ca
 ahañkāra itīyañ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā
 aparayañ itas tv anyāñ prakṛtiñ viddhi me parāñ
 jīva-bhūtāñ mahā-bāho yayedāñ dhāryate jagat*

Meaning :- Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego; these eight are the components of My inferior material nature. Above this material nature is My superior nature which is composed of living entities. The Gītā confirms that the living entity is superior to material nature but inferior to the transcendental spiritual potency. This is described by Śrīla KṛṣṇadāKaviraja in Caitanya Caritāmṛta:-

*jī vera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya dāsa
 kṛṣṇera tathasṭha śakti bhedābheda prakash*

The living entity is the eternal servant of the Supreme Lord and His marginal potency. He is equal in quality not in quantity and are the rays of the Supreme Lord. Just as the sun ordinarily radiates light, in this manner they are likewise emanating from the Supreme. In Vishnu Purāṇa the superior, marginal and the material energy have been discussed (para, kshetra and avidyā).

*kṛṣṇa bhūli sei jīva-anādi-bhahirmukha
ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra duḥkha*

The living entity has been covered by illusion for a long time and have been suffering countless miseries but by receiving the mercy of the pure devotees, he takes to the devotional service of the Lord which frees him from the effects of the illusory energy. Seeing the bewilderment of the living entity, the compassionate Lord reveals the scriptures. Consequently, by this utility of scripture with the help of the external spiritual master and internal 'caitya guru' (the Supreme Lord in the heart), he uncovers his real spiritual identity. This according to stages is the process of knowledge to Śrī Krishna (sambandha), the devotional practice which is abhideya and finally devotion to the Supreme Lord.

It has already been mentioned that the Lord is the controller of the material energy while the living entity can be subjugated by the material energy. The Svetasvetara Upaniṣada mentions:-

*bālāgra-śata bhāgasya śadadhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvaḥ ca vijñeyaḥ sa cānantyāya kalpate*

The living entity is compared to the size of one ten-thousandth of a tip of a single hair. Nevertheless, that same living entity can be qualified to be liberated. On Vedānta sūtra (2/3/18) it describes how the living entity, being very tiny, can be overcome by the tendency for either sinful or pious activities. Mandukā Śruti (3/1/19) describes, 'eso' nurātma cetasa veditavyo: The minute living soul ultimately has to attain the form of purified consciousness. The Lord is the controller of material energy while the living entity by nature being spiritual is liable to be influenced by the material energy due to its minute nature. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1/7/4-5) states:

*bhakti yogena manasi samyak praṇihite 'male
apaśyat puruṣaṁ pūrṇaṁ māyāṁ ca tad-apāśrayam
yayā sammohito jīva ātmānaṁ tri-guṇātmiakam
para 'pi manute 'nartham tat-kṛtāṁ cābhipadyate*

Śrīla Vyāsa deva, by the power of devotional service with his mind and senses perfectly controlled, was able to see the bodily complexion of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna with His different expansion and energies. He glimpsed also the material energy situated at the back of the Lord and as one aspect of His different energies. This material energy is the only shadow form of His spiritual internal potency and is responsible for the illusion of the living entity in two ways:- they are the 'akaranātmika' potency which functions to cover the living entity's original identity, the other is by the 'vikṣepātmika' potency by which the mind and intelligence of the living entity becomes confused or bewildered. The effect of this material energy binds the living entity into the triple modes of material nature, whereby immediately he develops the false consciousness of being the doer and enjoyer and by this his false ego becomes entangled. The characteristic of the marginal potency is of its being able to be influenced by both the spiritual and material energies.

From (Bṛhat Aranya Śruti 2/2/20)

*yathā agneḥ kṣudrā viśhpur liṅgā vyūcharantye
evam eva asmādātmanaḥ sarvāni bhūtāni vyūccharanti*

Just as many tiny sparks are emitted from a blazing fire, similarly many varieties of minute living entities are produced from the Supreme Lord. The living entity has option to either stay in the material world or attain the spiritual world, he is in the middle position at the demarcation between these two worlds and has equal opportunity to go to either of these worlds. This marginal position can be described for more clarity : Just as a huge fish can move either to one bank or the opposite bank, similarly the living entity, from his MARGINAL POSITION can go either to the material or spiritual worlds, and is dependent on whether he is dreaming (in illusion) or awake in knowledge. The word "taṭastha" is further examined. The boundary between the land and

the water is called the bank (taṭastha). This is usually a narrow strip so minute that it cannot be seen with a naked eye. If we compare the spiritual world to the ocean and the material world to be the land, that minute strip or boundary is the corresponding position of the living entity. Both these worlds are huge in comparison to the minute living entity. Thus in the middling position being the marginal energy, partial characteristics of both sides are present in the living entity. By proper spiritual cultivation, he can be spiritualized or conversely in being ignorant, can fall into the material whirlpool. Originally, the living entity is constituted of spiritual elements, not material. Nevertheless, it can be overcome by the force of material attraction. Without the association of pure devotees, the living entity cannot be released from his precarious position. In Caitanya Caritāmṛta is described how the living entities, though minute sparks of the Supreme, are either bonded or eternally liberated. The bonded souls are suffering hellish pains by punishment afflicted upon them by material nature due to their enjoying tendencies. Eventually, in receiving instructions from the pure devotees submissively, they can be freed by taking to the devotional service of the Lord. In C.C., the teachings to Sanātana Goswami, begins with:

*advaya-jñāna-tattva kṛṣṇa-svayam bhagavān
svarūpa-śaktirūpa taihāra haya avasthāna*

The Lord has two types of expansions (amśā). His own spiritual expansions, and the other His tiny living parts and parcels-jīva (vibhinnāmśā). Without the shelter of the Lord, the bonded living entities cannot escape from the clutches of Māyā. On this above verse, Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda comments that Lord Krishna is the Supreme Non-Dual Truth. His energies are equal to the source of energy but the energy in this connection is not the bewildering shadow material energy or that which deludes the bonded souls but that which serves Lord Krishna in His diverse loving pastimes. The 'Māyā' or

insurmountable material energy here has to be overcome and not worshipped. In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (2/5/13):

*villajaniānayā yasya sthātum īkṣā-pathe 'muya
vimohitā vikatthante mamāham iti durdhiyaḥ*

The material personified energy, being ashamed of her despicable work was not able to come in front of the Supreme Lord for by her action, the living entity becomes bewildered into thinking in terms of "me" and "mine". By these statements, the bewildering action of this material energy which causes the delusion of living entities has been condemned.

In the nectarine pastimes of Śrī Hari, the moods of contrasts are always present, the opposite contrasting mellows, inevitably serving to nourish such pastimes in full. It is not that one advocates all the opposite contrasting moods only and tries to reject the normal recommended practices. This type of action is not in accordance with the scriptures.

The scriptures like Bhagavad Gītā give proper direction of how one can overcome material nature and be freed. In actual fact, without the association of saintly personalities, one cannot understand the purports of these scriptures. The scriptures, with its manifold opposing conclusions are difficult to discern and their mystery can be uncovered in the proper vision, solely with the help of saintly people. In Bhagavad Gītā, the Supreme Lord has equivocally described the importance of work, yoga and knowledge but in the end has revealed the great secret, pure devotional service with the verses beginning with: "mān mana-bhava mad bhakta" and also "sarva dharman parityajya". These two verses contain the summumbonnum of devotional service. It has further been demonstrated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, that spontaneous attraction to the Supreme is expressed in the different loving ways of servitude, friendship, parental love and conjugal love, which is ascertained as the highest

goal. Śrīman Mahāprabhu had informed Śrīla Svarūpa Damodara for the benefit of the brahmins in Bengal province.

*yāha bhāgavata pade vaiṣṇavera sthāne
ekānta āsraya kara caitanya caraṇe
caitanya bhakta gaṇera nitya kara saṅga
tabe ta janibe siddhānta samudra-taraṅge*

One has to study the cream of all scriptures, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam in the association of the pure devotees of the Lord so that he can cross over the ocean of all types of deviant and opposing devotional conclusions. In this way, one can free himself from Mahā Māyā and take to the lotus feet of Śrī Krishna with devotion. Finally, the shelter of Śrīla Gurudeva is very essential in devotional service to get the mercy of Yogamāyā and free oneself from the effects of Mahā Māyā.

ACTUAL FORM OF KRISHNA

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja has written: Śrī Vrajanandana Śrī Krishna is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead above Lord Viṣṇu. He is the complete, resplendent form of ultimate existence, knowledge and supreme bliss being absolutely independent. He is the complete whole in respect to all His features. He manifests His sweet pastimes in Vraja in His original form. The devotees understand Him as the Supreme Absolute Truth and His name, form, qualities and pastimes are all transcendental. These transcendental features of the Lord are above the three modes of material nature and to call this form of the Lord as material is a great offense to the lotus feet of the Lord. Differentiation of the Lord or duality is an illusion. The Lord's form is non-different from Him otherwise in contemplating that the Lord's form is illusion would mean duality which is ignorance. Lord Krishna Himself, His original incarnations (vilāsa) pastimes expansions are all transcendental and are seen in the light of one non-dual truth. To the question of Saunaka Rsi, as to the essence of all scriptures, Suta Goswami replies: (SB 1/2/11)

*vidanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmetye bhagavān iti śabdyate*

The learned call the essence of truth as non-dual. The one absolute truth is known in three different aspects, firstly as Brahman (or effulgence); secondly as the Supersoul in the heart and thirdly as Bhagavan or the Supreme Lord Himself. The puṇḍits (jñānīs) reject all association with material nature as false or non-existent and identify the truth as the formless effulgence of the Lord called Brahman. The yogis however, with their one-pointed minds, locate Him, the Supreme Truth, as the form of the Supersoul in the heart devoid of any pastimes. The devotees view the Supreme Lord in His complete feature of knowledge, existence and bliss and exulting in unique

loving pastimes with His associates. Amongst the devotees of the Supreme Lord, the confidential devotees of Lord Krishna who taste the sweetness of loving pastimes in Vraja stand out as most superior in preference to those whose loving moods of servitorship are tinged with awe and reverence. In this context, just as one very far away can only perceive the effulgence of the sun, similarly the learned punḍits, not being able to behold the attractive form of Lord Śyāmasundara, are able to perceive only the shining effulgence emanating from the Supreme Lord. The yogīs understand the form of the all-pervading Lord as present in the hearts of the innumerable living entities and as the Supersoul in the heart. The devotees, by following the process of devotional service, are able to see the Lord's form in truth and amongst such devotees, those in the spontaneous loving moods, free from awe and reverence, can only be to fortunate visualize the pure, transcendental form of Śrī Krishna.

*ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puniṣaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokam mṛdayanti yuge yuge*

Śrī Rāma, Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, etc., are part of the incarnations of Vishnu or part of the part but Lord Śrī Krishna is the original Supreme Lord. He incarnates from age to age to rescue the demigods like Lord Indra from the oppression of the demons. As In C.Charitamrita Adi (2/89/90), the one candle which originally lights all the other candles, has the characteristic of being the original candle. Similarly, in this way Lord Śrī Krishna is the fundamental original person and all are His expansions. In Gītā too (14/21) the Supreme Lord says He is the basis for Brahman which is under His shelter. In Gītā (10/42)

*atha vā bahunaitena kiṁ jñātena tavārjuna
viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam, ekāṁśena sthito jagat*

In this verse, it mentions the Supreme Lord is existing in one part as the Supersoul in the heart of all living entities which is meditated upon by the yogis. He is also

celebrated as the Supreme Person (Purusottama) in His original form. The Kapila deva who founded the atheistic philosophy refers to creation as the ordinary combination of masculine and feminine gender. In Gītā (9/10), the Supreme Lord informs Arjuna that the material nature is always subordinate to Him and are one of His multifarious energies. But at the same time under His direction, material nature is able to produce the living and non-living entities. The Lord is in the form of purified goodness, being transcendental and has no direct connection with material nature. Mahā-Vishnu lying in the Causal Ocean from far away casts a glance on material nature by which the material nature becomes agitated to produce this world of living and non-living things. Thus the mere glance of the Supreme Lord is sufficient to create this universe. The primary cause of this creation is the Supreme Lord Krishna while the secondary cause is the material nature. As the nipples of the neck of the goat cannot give milk, similarly, without the energy of the Lord Krishna, the material nature cannot produce or create living entities. In the construction of an ornamented pot, earth is one of the ingredients, the potter is the direct cause or maker and his tools which include the potter's wheel are the secondary cause of the creation of the pot. In this way, Śrī Krishna in the form of Mahā-Vishnu is the main reason for creation of the universe and His implements of creation namely, time and His energies are the secondary causes. Nevertheless, the act of creation was done from very far away by Mahā-Vishnu, with faint resemblance of contact by limb i.e. in this case by His direct penetrating glance.

In the conversation of Śrī Kapiladeva and Devahuti (3/26/19), and also between Śrī Vidura and Maitreya (3/5/26), two verses are of significant:-

*daivāt kṣubhita-dharmīṇyāṁ svasyāṁ, yonau paraḥ pumān
ādhatta vīryaṁ sāsūta mahat-tattovan hiraṇmayam*

The Supreme Person injects His vital fluid into the agitated material energy and from the inert material nature, the Mahā-tattva was born.

*kāla-vṛttiyā tu māyāyām guṇa-mayyām adhokṣajah
puruṣeṇātma-bhūtena vīryam ādhatta vīryavān*

The partial expansion of Lord Mahā-Vishnu, injected the living entities with His transcendental potencies in the aggrieved restless condition of material nature, by the influence of time. In the form of Mahā-Vishnu, His only contact with material nature is His sweet will by which the innumerable tiny spiritual sparks are injected into material nature. Firstly, the inert initial condition of nature is called pradhana and by the glance of the Lord, the mahat-tattva is formed from the static material nature after which this Mahat-tattva when impelled by time, gives rise to three kinds of false-ego as in the modes of Goodness, Passion and ignorance, respectively. The living entities originally of spiritual constitution becomes embedded in the mahat-tattva whose predominating Deity is Vāsudeva. The transformation of this mahat-tattva, by the false-ego in the mode of Goodness, gives rise to the mind and the presiding Deities or demigods, the predominating Deity of this mode of Goodness is Aniruddha. The transformation of this mahat-tattva, by the false-ego in the mode of Passion, develops into intelligence and the subtle senses. The Deity for this mode is Pradyumna. The transformation of the mahat-tattva in the mode of ignorance gives rise to the five elements and the tan-matras (sound, touch, sight). The predominating Deity for this mode is Sankarshana.

Though the acts of creation are exclusively done by the expansions of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord Krishna is eternally present in His transcendental abode Goloka Vrindavana and is constantly engaged there without break performing His sweet nectarine pastimes in His original pure form. He, together with His own internal potency, enacts His spiritual pastimes constantly and has no need

of performing any other work. His extraordinary form by which all His pastimes are carried out is the transformation of His sandhini potency (internal potency).

Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda writes :-

Krishna's childhood pastimes in Goloka, His expansions as Vasudeva and Sankarshana in the spiritual planets, the functions of Vishnu-Puruṣa incarnations, the uncommon appearances as Matsya (Fish) or Kurma (Tortoise), incarnations at different ages, the incarnations in the different modes like Lord Śiva and Brahma, the empowered incarnations like King Pṛthu and Vyāsadeva, The Qualified Supersoul in the heart of all, the formless Brahman or effulgence are all His variegated pastimes. In comparison of the Supreme Lord's infinite pastimes, manifesting as above, the most superior is His conjugal loving mellows with the cowherd damsels of Vraja. The form of Krishna is very human-like. He is young in complexion and dresses like a cowherd boy. He, with flute in His hand, is expert in song and gait. The forms of His in His different pastimes in the material world is not mortal, neither is it limited or divided in any way, nor can it be covered by material nature in the slightest. The Deities in the mode of Absolute Goodness (paravyoma) does not have any control over this incredible internal potency of His (yogamāyā), which is under the sole jurisdiction of the Supreme Lord alone. The Lord has appeared from His spiritual abode with His extraordinary form worshipped by His devotees, also demonstrating at the same time the amazing power of His Yoga-māyā potency. Lord Krishna is the original Supreme Lord, He enacts His most nectarine pastimes as the Supreme Absolute Truth. All expansions emanate from Him. He is the final repose and controller of all beings. He presents Himself as a young cowherd boy and the son of Nanda Mahārāja, King of Vraja. He is eternally performing blissful pastimes in Vrindāvana, which is non-different from the original Goloka.

He, accompanied by His spiritual paraphernalia appears in every one day of Lord Brahma in this material world. This period is called one kalpa. The duration of Kali-yuga is 432,000 years while the other ages are twice, thrice and four times the measure of this duration. The combination of these four yugas or one Mahā-yuga has the duration of 4,320 000 years and 72 Mahā-yugas is the time of one Manu, the governor of this universe, and a total of 14 such Manus is the day of Lord Brahma. We are presently living in the reign of the 7th Manu, Vaivasvata Manu. In this same Manvantara, on the 28th Mahā-yuga, at the end of Dvāparā-yuga, Lord Krishna advents and exhibits His uncommon pastimes which is immediately followed by that of Lord Gaurāṅga in Kali-yuga. It is important to mention here that the religious principles of any specific Yuga can be established by other expansions of the Supreme Lord but the Divine Sports of Vraja with the reciprocal exchange of transcendental loving mellows, is the monopoly of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna exclusively. The propagation of such spontaneous loving mellows can only be done by Śrī Krishna, therefore in this way He is non-different from Lord Gaurāṅga. The removal of the heavy burden of the Earth is usually not the normal pastime of the Supreme Lord Krishna but is done by the Maintainer of the universe: Lord Vishnu. Incidentally, Lord Krishna appeared at a time when there was a dire need to remove the excess weight on the planet Earth. Lord Krishna is the Supreme Lord, while His plenary expansions and their expansions are all under His shelter. In fact, originally Lord Vishnu was present in the spiritual body of Śrī Krishna. Especially, it was through Lord Vishnu that Śrī Krishna performed all His works like that relating to killing of the demons and establishment of religious principles. The primary function of Lord Krishna's descent is not mainly these purposes such as killing of demons, etc., this are joint secondary causes in compliance with maintaining the religious order for that period. The fundamental reason for His descent is the

relishing of His own natural spontaneous mellows and the propagation of these moods. Usually, Lord Vishnu carries out the propagation of formal codes of regulated devotional practice from which spontaneous devotion is hardly available. Lord Krishna has again descended as Lord Gaurāṅga to relish spontaneous mellows and to distribute it. In order to find the extent of Śrī Rādhā's love, His own deep innate sweetness which He Himself could not fathom and the type of Her happiness in their transcendental conjugal relationship, Lord Krishna taking the mood and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārānī has appeared as Lord Gaurāṅga. This has been explained in the Caitanya Caritāmṛta by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Goswami.

Lord Krishna, the son of Nanda Mahārāja as the cow-herd boy in Vraja exhibits the Vaibhava form and in the dress and mood of a warrior appears in His Prabhava expansion. Ultimately He is one, but for the sake of executing His diverse sports and pastimes, He appears differently. Similarly, His expansions as the Super soul in the heart or as the formless Brahman are non different from Him.

*jñāna, yoga, bhakti, — tina sādhanera vaśe
brahma, ātmā, bhagavān, — trividdha prakāśe*

(CC M 20/157)

For the learned punḍits, He appears as the concept of the formless Brahman, without form and attributes. To the Yogīs, who engage in the eight-fold mystic yoga process, He appears as the Supersoul in the heart. Finally to those who cultivate devotional service to search out the Absolute, He manifest His complete, unique form of existence, knowledge and bliss. The most exquisite form of the Lord Krishna can only be realized in the absorption in pure spontaneous loving mellows not tinged with awe and reverence.

Many declare Him to be with form while others deny

this form with futile arguments. However, the Supreme Lord can manifest in both these ways. Is it that in acceptance of a form would mean that the Supreme can be touched by effect of material nature? But in fact, this is not so. He is the reservoir of all variegated energies, by which He manifests and preserves His transcendental form. Hence the transformations of material nature has no effect on Him and He remains untouched and aloof, the transcendental autocrat. The scriptures refer to Him in many places, as without qualities : Hayasirsva Pancharatra has the verse

*ya ya śrutirjalpati nirviśeṣam sā sābhidhate sa viśeṣam eva
vicārayoge satihasta tasam prāyo baliyah sa viśeṣam eva*

Those scriptures which declare the superiority of the Absolute Truth without qualities in the beginning, at the end declares the Superiority of the Absolute Truth with qualities. By experience the Supreme Truth with qualities is better known and can be more easily accepted. From Taitriya Upanishads we have further this statement:-

*yato va imani bhutani jāyante yena jātāni
jivanti yatprayantya bhisamviśanti tadvijijñāsa sva tadera
brahma*

Meaning :- The Supreme Lord, by His acts of creation, maintenance and destruction, has to be with attributes by virtue of all these actions (ablative, causative and locative) in thinking, feeling and willing. Further, to magnify this point, the Taitreya Upanishad has the verse "bahu syam" and "sa iksata", which declares that by His glance only did the material creation took place. From this we can infer that His eyes and mind existed before material creation, and therefore is not material but spiritual altogether. The 'brahma' which is used in many texts is in fact referring to the blissful Absolute Brahman-Śrī Krishna. In Bhagavad Gītā too, there are many verses which was spoken by Lord Krishna Himself who declares Himself as the Supreme Person, the end of the Vedas

'loke ca prathitah Purusottama' .

In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the essence of the all scriptures the verse is mentioned (10/14/32)

*aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam nanda-gopa-vrajaukasam
yan-mitram paramānandam pūrṇam brahma sanātanam*

The fortune of the cowherd boys and the residents of Vraja is without comparison, for the eternal blissful form of Śrī Krishna as the highest Brahman has appeared as their very friend. The Śrutis have their sayings like 'raso vai sah' 'ananda mayo bhyasat' which mean that the Supreme Truth is completely blissful, transcendental and the reservoir of loving devotional mellows. On the contrary, the Impersonalist dismisses the possibility of pastimes in any relationship between the Supreme Lord and his surrendered devotees, not knowing the infinite joy and sweetness of such loving relationships. They even try ultimately to eradicate all the differences between knowledge, knower and known, forgetting that by doing so they can never relish any of the Lord's pastimes,

*apani-pādo javano grahita paśyaty
acakṣuḥ śṛṇoty akarnaḥ
sa vetti vedyam na ca tasyānti
vetta tam ahur agrayaṁ puruṣam mahātām*

The Svetasvatara Upanishad rejects all conceptions of His possessing material hands and legs, instead declare all His working sense organs are transcendental. One in recollecting the words of the Śruti with a sober mind can by analysis, understand that the Supreme Lord with qualities predominate in contrast with the version of that without qualities as the verdict of the Impersonalists. The Impersonalists dare to discredit the Supreme as without any energies. In defense to this, Svetasvatara Śruti declares the Lord as having three natural energies:- "parasya śaktir vividhaiva druyate. In the claim of Brahman as without energies, how can the Impersonalists ever hope to increase the glory of Brahman?

Lord Śrī Krishna with His transcendental name, form and qualities are of unlimited splendor, opulence and divinity and for this reason, His ability to be the controller of material energy remains intact.

*harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
sa sarva-dṛg upadraṣṭā taṁ bhajan nirguṇo bhavet*

Lord Hari is above the three mood of nature, the Supreme Person and eternal witness. In worshipping Him, the living entity attains to transcendence . The Vedic scriptures have descriptions of the Supreme Lord, living entity and material energy. In consideration of these precepts, we understand the form of the Supreme Lord to be transcendental, of knowledge, existence and bliss. The spiritual energy is present in three features which is knowledge (sat), existence (cit) and bliss (ananda). The energy by which the Supreme Lord creates and maintains all living existences is the sandhini potency. The energy by which He can understand Himself and relate too, this knowledge to others is chit or the samvit potencies. The energy by which He understands His own happiness and able to give this to others is hladini potency.

The energy which creates all existence's is this sandhini potency and in the pure spiritual dimension, all such actions are above the modes of material nature. The sandhini, internal potency of the Lord is responsible for this unique transcendental form, as well as all existences in the spiritual worlds plus, His spiritual associates and all other necessary paraphernalia which are necessary ingredients in His pastimes. In the domain of material energy, this sandhini aspect causes the creation of the various material universes, while in the realm of the marginal energy, this aspect causes the production of the unlimited spiritual sparks (jīvas). The eternal principle called 'Vāsudeva' is energized by the effect of the sandhini feature on the spiritual internal potency. It is from this concept of 'Vāsudeva' that we can understand Lord

Krishna in truth. The 'samvit' potency is referred exclusively to the knowledge aspect. The samvit potency in being yoked to the hladini energy in giving mercy to the ordinary living entity is able to reveal the supremacy of Lord Śrī Krishna's position. When the pleasure potency of Śrī Krishna, (which is the hladini potency) in combination with the pure samvit potency together gives mercy to the living entity, then love of Godhead fructifies for that individual. If in the marginal potency the hladhini aspect of the living entity becomes bewildered by the illusory energy, the living entity becomes attached to material nature and falls into oblivion. The internal pleasure potency gives rise to love of Godhead. In pure love, there is intensity of spontaneous moods and the highest exhibition of such moods was shown by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, most beloved of Śrī Krishna. The eternally worshipping deities are the combination of Śrī Rādhā and Krishna. Śrī Krishna is the source of all energies, while Śrīmatī Rādhikā represents energy. In actual fact, there is no difference between these two. Indeed Śrī Krishna without the presence of Śrīmatī Rādhikā is like the sun without its strong heat.

In a striking discussion between Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Rāya Rāmānanda, the worship of the Divine Couple was stressed as the greatest perfection.

*upāsyera mādhye kon upāsyā pradhāna
śreṣṭha-upāsyā yugala rādhā-kṛṣṇa-nāma*

On the contrary, in the consideration of the formless aspect of the Lord. No one will be able to relish this variegated and wonderful pastimes which the Supreme Lord had performed. The Supreme Lord by His inconceivable potency, has manifested His divine birth and pastimes which are all completely transcendental (Śrīpad Rāmānujācārya) and beyond this material world. (Śrīpad Śrīdhara Swami). It is to be considered that such birth and pastimes are not only spiritual but eternal.

*ava jānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīntanum āśritam
param bhāvam ajānanto mama bhūta-maheśvaram*

Meaning :- The people of materialistic and ignorant nature mistake My Supreme transcendental form to be material, not knowing My divine nature. The hopes, knowledge and actions of all these people bewildered by ignorance and passion become fruitless.

*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛitīm asṛitāḥ
bhajanty anyaya-manaso jñātvā bhūtādim avyavayam*

The wise people are known as 'mahatmas' for they, taking shelter of the divine energy, worship Me in My original pure form as Lord Krishna, as the beginning and end of all living beings, unalloyedly, not caring for works or knowledge.

In Gītā (9/14) Śrī Krishna describes the true process of worship to Him.

*satatam kīrtayanto mām yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā nitya-yuktā upāsate*

My devotee, not specifically caring for the proper time, place and circumstance, worships whole-heartedly through the hearing, chanting, remembering of My Holy Names and paying obeisances rigidly to Me constantly through the cultivation of knowledge of My form and qualities. For example a poor householder striving to seek wealth, seeks the assembly of rich people. In this manner, My devotee goes to the assembly of saintly people to earn the wealth of devotions as in the method of chanting the Holy Names, etc.. he will revise and study thoroughly the purports of scriptures, without fail observe the vow of Ekadāśī, perform the systematic chanting of the Holy Names and pay obeisances in a rigid manner in devotional practices. Gradually, he will be able to attain a perfected body by which he can worship Me in constant communion. Here the Lord has stressed the importance of His actual worship by the chanting of His Holy Names,

form, pastimes and activities.

It must be understood that only in constant prayer and worship of the lotus feet of the spiritual master, devotees and Supreme Lord will the essence of the scriptures and the fruit of all vows be finally realized.

Eventually, when by such practice all ignorance becomes dissipated, then the transcendental birth and activities of the Supreme Lord will become more defined.

ŚRĪ JAGANNĀTHA RATHA-YATRA

In the beginning Śrīman Mahāprabhu for His first twenty four years acted as regular householder in Sridham Navadvipa. He after that time, in the holy City of Puri in His role as a renunciate, began exhibiting the pangs of intense separation characteristic of high devotional moods. Apparently, although it was His mother's behest in Advaita Bhavan for Him to reside in the holy City of Puri, in actual fact it was all His own very plan. Puri City is the Supreme Lord's natural abode. The other familiar names for this City are Purusottama, Śrī Kṣetra, Nilacala. Lord Śrī Krishna at one time, informed Śrī Mahādeva about His hidden realm Puri whose glories are understood by only a very few (Caitanya Bhāgavata Antya 2nd).

The Supreme Lord manifests in five pastimes in this universe namely, as the Supreme Lord in His original form (para tattva), His four immediate main expansions (catur vyuha), as the different incarnations (vaibhava), as the Supersoul in the heart of all living entities (antaryami) and lastly the Deity form of the Lord (archa). From the spiritual world, the Supreme Lord incarnates in different Deity forms (archa), together with His personal associates and complete with the original spiritual land, into this world (Bhauma Vaikuṇṭha). Some known examples of these (archa avatāras) incarnated transcendental forms of the Lord are Adi Keshava in Mathura City, Bindhu-Madhava in Prayaga City, Lord Vishnu in Vishnu-Kāñchi, Lord Hari as in Māyāpura and likewise Lord Jagannatha in the holy City at Puri.

However, Śrīman Mahāprabhu viewed this Deity of Jagannātha as non-different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Krishna Himself who is the origin of all incarnations. Merely seeing the Disc at the summit of the temple dome of Śrī Jagannātha from far away. He began to envision a dark-blue boy playing on His flute.

Later, in entering the temple and seeing Lord Jagannatha face-to-face, He, in His mood of contemplation of the impeccable three-bending beautiful form of Śrī Krishna, rushed to embrace Him. During the time of cart festival of Lord Jagannātha He, while observing the Deity, became overcome by the sublime sentiments of Śrī Rādhā. The same Śrī Rādhā had nursed similiar sentiments on beholding Lord Krishna during the occasion of the solar eclipse at Kurukṣetra many, many years ago.

Once, previously there was very rare eclipse of the sun in Kurukṣetra. On that auspicious occasion, many wealthy, influential Kings came from other different places to congregate at this holy place of pilgrimage. Lord Krishna arrived there from Dvaraka with His chariot driven by servant Daruka in regal opulence. His huge army of soldiers, consisted of soldiers ridding on elephants, other soldiers on horses or with horses combined with chariots plus infantrymen. He, in His exhibition of incredible opulence, encamped at this holy place with well-adorned tents consisting of numerous canopies with costly bedsteads, silk cushions and other luxurious paraphernalia. From another direction, the residents of Vraja simultaneously arrived there torn in separation from their beloved Śrī Krishna and yearning to see Him, waiting some distance not far away from His camp. Their only real motive to arrive in that place of pilgrimage was to meet the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. Conversely Śrī Krishna too had arrived there, one of His prime reasons being to pacify the love-pent emotions of the residents of Vraja. Then the traumatic meeting took place of Lord Krishna with His parents, Nanda Baba and Yaśodā Ma accompanied by the other older residents, who had either nourished fatherly or motherly affection for Him. It was very touching scene, for these simple villagers with their voices choked in their throats and with streams of tears issuing from their eyes began to embrace and kiss Him fervently on His cheeks. They had intended to speak many things but were prevented by their force of emotion and

the only words that stuttered from their mouths was 'my Gopal'. These tears of love that emanated from their eyes drenched Śrī Krishna from head to foot and He too, was experiencing similar sentiments with tears in His eyes. This same type of touching moods are experienced on the devotee's final sweet reunion with the Supreme Lord. On another side, Subala, Sridama and Sudama ect. the bosom friends of Śrī Krishna were anxiously waiting to meet Him. Thus, after offering obeisances to His tearful parents and other elderly residents, Lord Krishna approached His bosom companions who were in the loving sentiments of friendship. They all on that initial meeting, were reduced to the similar pitiable state of speechlessness. His friends were having indignantly many things to protest in terms of their neglect by Lord Krishna, but the overwhelming ecstasy of the occasion stunned them to the state where they could only mutter "My brother Kanniah". While fondly embracing their long-last friend. Lord Krishna too, exhibited similar symptoms of ecstasy in friendship for He is "bhava-agrahi", reciprocating with each particular devotee according to his mood. How glorious is the love of the denizens of Vraja! Then the inevitable meeting with the cowherd maidens (gopīs) took place. Their pathetic condition was hardly describable.! The crown jewel of the gopīs, Śrīmatī Rādhikā was swooning and fainting at every moment in pangs of separation, so much so that when the sakhis placed a swab of cotton at the base of Her nose, there seemed to be no apparent movement of the cotton indicating the symptoms of no life. Suddenly when the loud cry of "Oh Syamasundara" penetrated the very air, Śrīmatī Rādhikā couldn't withhold Herself anymore and became rejuvenated becoming conscious of Her main reason to arrive at that very place.

In the conversation of Rāya Rāmānanda with Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the loving sentiments of Śrīmatī Rādhārānī have been termed the topmost of all spontaneous devotional practices. These highest sentiments contain a transformation of moods which enrich and nourish each

other. The loving mellows which are torn asunder by mutual separation is called "vipralambha" and that of direct conjugal loving mellows, "sambhoga". The conjugal loving mellows is nourished by that of love in separation, both are existent for the proper transaction of loving mellows. Śrīman Mahāprabhu while dancing ecstatically in front of the cart of Lord Jagannātha manifested the same loving sentiments which were possessed by Śrīmatī Rādhārānī. She, at Kuruksetra, after many years of being separated, had experienced an overpowering bliss in the reunion with Lord Krishna. The wise Svarupa Damodar understanding the heart of Śrīman Mahāprabhu during His ecstatic dancing, began to sing this couplet:

*sei ta parāṇa-nātha pāinu
yāhā lāgi madanadahane jhūrī genu*

As Svarupa Damoda sang this chorus, Śrīman Mahāprabhu began to dance ecstatically in front of the cart with great vigor while the cart began to move slowly forward. Sometimes Śrīman Mahāprabhu would make a show of dancing to the back of the chariot which would make Lord Jagannātha reluctant to move forward and the chariot would come to a stand-still. When Śrīman Mahāprabhu again went forward, the Supreme Lord Jagannātha would also begin to trudge slowly forward (CC M.13/118-119).

The mystery of this pastime has been explained by Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda in his commentary. The reason why Śrīman Mahāprabhu went backwards was to test whether His moods, which represented the original sentiments of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, were the reason for the movement of Lord Jagannātha, or whether Lord Krishna (Lord Jagannātha) had other motives in mind. To solve this doubt, He acted as if He was going backwards. Śrī Jagannātha apparently understanding this action of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, stopped His own movement to wait for Him. The reason for that being without the presence of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the conjugal loving mellows in Vraja

does not reach its par-excellence. Lord Gaurasundara, in realising the non-movement of Lord Jagannātha, was due to the superior devotional potency of the Śrīmatī Rādhikā became joyful and lunged in front of the cart with great bliss while Lord Jagannātha abashed came trudging slowly behind. Here, when Lord Caitanya was exhibiting the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī for Śrī Krishna, Lord Jagannātha Deva too, was unable to ignore these intense loving moods of Lord Gaurasundara. In this way, the loving moods of Śrīman Mahāprabhu towards Lord Jagannātha and in turn the reciprocal sentiments of Lord Jagannātha began competing with each other but the intense loving moods of Śrīman Mahāprabhu which were similar to Śrīmatī Rādhānī's own moods, won in the end being more greater. While dancing, Śrīman Mahāprabhu began to intone a verse which depicted somewhat the love reunion of the usual hero and heroine in ordinary literature. Nonetheless, Śrīla Rupa Goswami, detecting the exact devotional sentiments in the heart of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, composed the following verse:

*priyaḥ so'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-carī kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāham sā rādhā tam idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pañcamajuje
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya spṛhayati*

Meaning: "Hey companions, I did meet our beloved Śrī Krishna in Kurukṣetra today. I am the same Rādhā and we had met with usual feeling of ecstasy. Nevertheless, My mind is yearning to be with Lord Krishna by the forest groves on the banks of Kalindi River and to hear Him blissfully playing His melodious fifth note on His flute".

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja has written an account of this in his Caitanya Caritāmṛta:

*kanāhā gopa veśa kanāhā nirjana vṛndāvana
sei bhāva, sei kṛṣṇa sei vṛndāvana
also vraje toṁāra saṅge yei sukha āsvādana
sei sukha-samudrera iha nāhi eka kṛpā*

Śrīman Mahāprabhu was in the sentiments of Śrī Rādhikā who was wanting to take Lord Krishna to their own natural residence of Vrindāvana, now began to utter this verse whilst dancing:

*āhuśca te nalinābha-padāravindam
yogeśvarar hṛdi vicintyam agādhābodhaiḥ
saṁsāra kupa patitottaraṇa avalambha
geham juṣamāpi manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ*

The gopīs prayed: "Oh Lord possessing a lotus navel, for those who have fallen on the pit of material existence, their only way to extricate themselves is the shelter of Your divine lotus feet. Your transcendental form is realized by the yogis in the deep recesses of their mind. May that transcendental form appear within the minds of fallen householders like us!".

*tomāra caraṇa mora vraja-pura ghare
udaya karaye yadi tabe vāñchā pure*

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja has given an extraordinary purport for the above verse. The heart of Śrīmatī Rādhikā is immersed in the loving sentiments of Vṛndāvana Dhāma. There, only the pure desires of satisfying the senses of Śrī Krishna exist and nothing else. In the moods of pure conjugal loving mellows, not a trace of the mood of awe and reverence (opulence) can exist. For this very reason, Śrīmatī Rādhikā did not in the least appreciate the regal splendor of Lord Krishna with all His the camels, horses, servants and costly apparels. "Oh Krishna! If You actually love me then all this fancy opulence which diminishes pure conjugal love should be given up and reassuming Your youthful form as a cowherd boy, You should come to Vraja with Me. There, in the lonely forest groves by the banks of the Yamuna River, under the kadamba tree, You should enact Your extremely charming three-fold bending posture, playing on Your flute. Please grace this forlorn servant of Yours freely by Your merciful glance. Only in Your granting Me Your pure devotional

service will be the proof of Your deep love devoid of any falsity, by which I will consider Myself most fortunate".

Hence, in the hearts of the simple cowherd maidens whose hearts were saturated with natural devotion, there was no place for instructions on the acquiring knowledge or mysticism. The same love-stricken cowherd maidens were in the attempt of taking Lord Krishna from Kurukṣetra to Śrī dhāma Vṛndāvana- the transcendental place where spontaneous loving dealings are eternally going on.

This is the explanation of the Rātha-yatra pastime of Lord Jagannātha from the main temple which is synonymous to the opulence of Kurukṣetra, to the Gundica Temple which represents pure devotion of Sridham Vṛindāvana.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10/82/45), the Lord says:

*mayi bhaktir hi bhutānām amṛtatvāya kalpate
distiya yad asin mat sneho bhavatinām madāpanah*

"The highest ambrosia for all living entities is My devotional service, Oh Gopīs, your deep love and affection that you feel for Me is the only way for you to attain Me".

Ultimately, the natural spontaneous exhibition of devotion only is that which attracts Lord Krishna to the devotee. The actual means for moving the cart is this rope of pure devotion. In Vaishnava tantra it is mentioned that:

*mathurā dvārakā līlā yāh karoti ca gokule
nilachala stitah kṛṣṇastā eva carati prabhuḥ*

"Whatever types of pastimes that Lord Śrī Krishna performed in the different regions of Mathurā, Dwārakā or Gokula were all executed in full measure in the place called Nilachala (Holy City of Puri).

The Vedas informed us (Ṛg Veda 10 section 3/144). The wooden Deity of Lord Jagannātha which is present in the land of Purushottama is self-manifest and

completely transcendental, though seemingly to be made of daru wood. One should take shelter of this Supreme Lord (Daru Brahman) and by proper worship to Him, attain the spiritual world of Lord Vishnu.

Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dās Ṭhākura has termed Śrīman Mahāprabhu as the moving Jagannātha. It is this very Lord Jagannātha who has appeared in the material world in the guise of a renunciate and has declared the potency of the Holy Names to be able to give all perfection to everyone. Therefore those with an intelligent frame of mind will take to the chanting of the Holy Names. This is the way to worship the Supreme Lord Jagannātha and achieve the spiritual world. The highly devotional song 'Gita-Govinda' is favorite of Lord Jagannātha. The Lord Śrīman Mahāprabhu, in His pastimes of relishing the spontaneous loving mellows, is also inviting all of us likewise to follow His path to achieve the highest bliss. For pursuing these highest mellows, there is only one way for proper qualification which is taking complete shelter of the chanting of the Holy Names.

**Extract from Sri Srila Prabhapada
Bhajan Upadesh by Srila Bhakti
Promode Puri Maharaja:**

The Name should be chanted keeping a careful count and one should try to increase this to one lakh of holy Names daily. In not being able to do so means one is simply 'fallen'. One should try to rise up from that state by chanting seriously.